G8 meeting in Japan amid global slump

SAPPORO, JAPAN—BETWEEN SURGING oil prices, fund inflation and a credit crunch that has depressed global growth, leaders from the Group of Eight economic powers face the gravest combination of economic woes in at least a decade when they gather here on Monday.

Foreshadowing possible disagreement among the leaders, the finance ministers were divided on where to assign blame for the run-up in oil prices. Germany, France and Italy held speculators largely accountable, while the United States and

G8 MEETING / A13

SPORTS / A22

71st UAAP season kicks off today

BUSINESS / B1

BSP says economy to normalize in early '09

ACROSS / A14

'Frank' victims in Sibuyan town take 6-km trek for half kilo of rice

PROPERTY / B2-1

RP properties hottest in Asean, says int'l real estate firm

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, July 5, 2008 ★ Vol. 23 | No. 211 website: www.inquirer.net

RP stocks post gains but peso hits 10-mo low

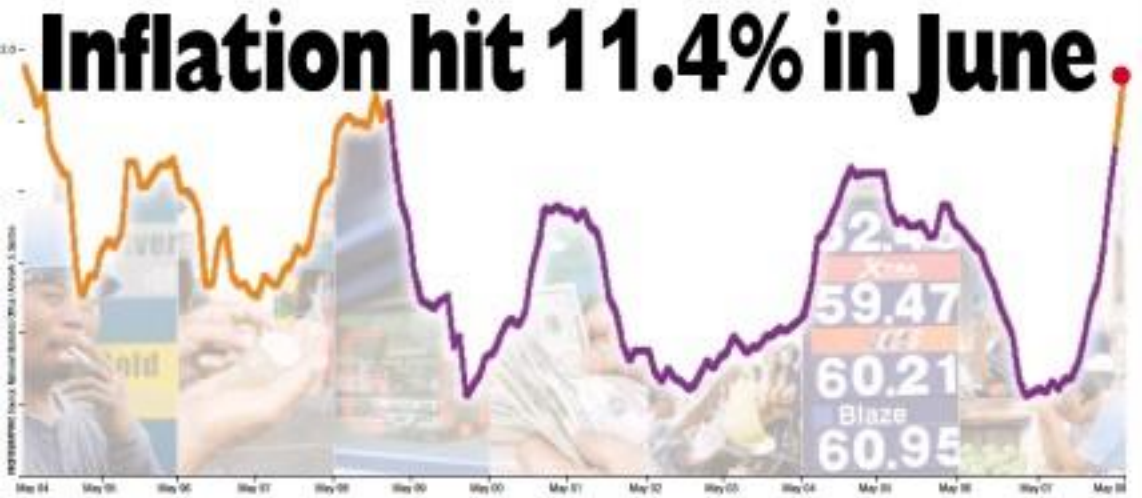
By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson and Doris C. Dumlao

THE STOCK MARKET YESTERDAY shrugged off concerns brought on by a galloping inflation and looming hike in interest rates, posting gains of 1.25 percent at the end of the trading day.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index

RP STOCKS A11

Inflation hit 11.4% in June



Del Monte summoned to explain toxic cargo

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE COAST GUARD'S BOARD of Marine Inquiry (BMI) has summoned representatives of Del Monte Philippines Inc. to respond to the accusations that it had declared a container van of endosulfan on board the illfated MV Princess of the Stars as ordinary cargo.

Rear Adm. Benjamin Mata, the BMI vice chair, said the board would ask the Del Monte representatives to present documents covering the cargo of endosulfan, a highly toxic insecticide.

"We also request Sulpicio Lines Inc. to provide us docu-

DEL MONTE/B2

Fastest rate recorded in 14 years, says Neda

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PRICES OF SERVICES and goods consumed by an average Filipino household went up by 11.4 percent in June from a year ago—the fastest rate recorded in 14 years—due largely to the substantial increase in the cost of rice and other food products, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

The price of rice alone soared by 40 percent due to higher cost of inputs and growing demand for the staple. This means that the rice a consumer bought for P100 in June last year may be had for P140 in June this year.

INFLATION/A11

MADDENING CROWD With the relentless rise of oil, the MRT/LRT stations these days look like it's rush-hour every hour with more commuters increasingly taking the train. By midnight Friday, diesel and kerosene was up by P2, gasoline by P1 and LPG P1.50. RAFFY

IN THE KNOW

What is inflation?

By Inquirer Research

A HOMEMAKER LIVING IN QUEZON City says that the money she has set aside for a month's worth of groceries five years ago can only cover two weeks' worth of the same necessities today.

WHAT IS A/11

Sibuyan islanders lauded as 'the best face' of a nation

By Tarra Quismundo and Madonna T. Virola
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN FERNANDO, SIBUYAN ISland—This town of 22,000 that continues to cope with a double tragedy has earned praise as "the best face" of a nation.

On a flying visit here on Thursday afternoon, Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, lauded the town for its strength in helping respond to a tragedy in its waters and a disaster on its shores—the sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars and the devastation wrought by Typhoon "Frank" inland.

"San Fernando is one whole people reporting to us what was happening [when the ship sank]. I'm here to honor you, I'm here applauding you," Gordon told some 1,000 residents who turned up for his visit at the town plaza.

"San Fernando is showing the best face of what a country should be at all times," he said.

The senator visited the

SIBUYAN/A6

Sulpicio seeks help of bishop

By Kristine L. Alave and Michael Lim Ubac

THE GO FAMILY, WHICH OWNS Sulpicio Lines Inc., sought a Catholic bishop's help in lobbying Malacañang for the resumption of its operations.

In an interview with the Chandivan Radio Veritas aired before the prelates' retreat on Wednesday, Bacnan Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos said he was approached by the company owner he identified only as "Mr. Go" to help Sulpicio Lines appeal to the Palace to allow

SULPICIO/A6

NATIONAL TREASURE AT HISTORIC LANDMARK After arriving from LA on Friday, Pacquiao goes to Quiapo Church to hear a thanksgiving Mass for his victory, which also made history as he became the first Asian to hold four titles in different weight divisions.

Manny back, gives P3M for typhoon victims

By Jacolyn R. Uy, Julie M. Aurelio and Tina G. Santos

THE PHILIPPINES' BOXING KING has come home bearing four glittering, golden belts to signify the world titles he has won in different divisions, but the massive crowds and the showers of confetti that marked his precious triumphal returns from conquests abroad weren't there yesterday.

But Manny Pacquiao, dubbed by some as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, wasn't flustered.

Hardly had he arrived when he announced that he was donating P3 million of his ring earnings for the relief of victims of Typhoon "Frank." He

MANNY/A6

'Pregnant man' in Oregon gives birth to girl

LOS ANGELES—THOMAS Beatie, who was born a woman but after surgery and hormone treatment lives as a man, has given birth to a girl at an Oregon hospital, People magazine reported on Thursday.

Beatie, 34, who kept female reproductive organs when he legally became a man 18 years ago, confirmed the birth to the magazine.

PREGNANT/A6

A1
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, JULY 5, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Cool and Northeast winds blow and Batanes will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, and Visayas and Mindanao while the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Legazpi City	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Naga	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Cuyo	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Aparri	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Iloilo City	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Virac	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Dumaguete City	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Puerto Princesa	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Cebu City	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Catarman	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Tagbilaran City	Mostly cloudy with thund...
Calapan	Mostly cloudy with thund...	Roxas	Mostly cloudy with thund...

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DOJ files raps vs Adaza, 4 others

Daughters of slain peasant leader abducted, says ma

By Nikko Dizon

THE LETEST GROUP KARAPATAN yesterday claimed that the military had abducted on Thursday two women who were the daughters of a slain peasant leader last Thursday.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines dismissed the claims as leftist propaganda.

Karapatan said that Rose Anne Guinaroso and her sister Paloma had been taken from their homes in Bicol, Manila, that they were picked up by soldiers and brought to Camp Aguinaldo.

Fr. Diony Catubig of Karapatan told the reporters by phone yesterday that he and Mario Guinaroso went to the office of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) at the military headquarters to look for Rose Anne and Paloma.

"We were told that they were not there. We have submitted a request letter to the Isafp asking them to confirm that they do not have custody of the girls," Catubig said.

The priest said the Isafp would issue a certification in three days.

Catubig said that last Thursday, Rose Anne and Paloma were on their way to Cavite when they noticed that they were being followed.

They sent a text message to their brother to meet them at a mall in Alabang, Muntinlupa but they were apprehend at the meeting place, Catubig said.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres assailed the claim, saying that Karapatan's allegation was "malicious and obviously a propaganda stunt."

Torres said that Rose Anne, 28, ran away from her Karapatan connection and sought refuge among soldiers after her husband, while confined at the AFP Medical Center a few months ago.

He said she was at the hospital for treatment of injuries she sustained in a gunfight between New People's Army rebels and troops from the Army's 10th Infantry Battalion last April 15 in Guinarod, Bokod, Quezon.

Rose Anne, a suspected member of the NPA, has been charged with rebellion.

"She left her life was threatened," Torres said in a text message.

He added that upon taking custody of Rose Anne, the military gave her medical examination.

"Coordination is being done by the military with the Quezon court in regards her legal designation, like to facing a rebellion charge. A warrant of arrest was issued by the court," Torres said. He added that Rose Anne was accompanied by her lawyer.

Catubig said that Rose Anne had been informed on full upon the orders of an Inhuan, Quezon trial court.

The women's father, Eddie Guinaroso, was the chairperson of Kalipunan ng Samahang Magsasaka sa Timog Sentrahing Quezon-TSQ.

He was murdered with human rights activist Eden Marcellana in Mauban, Quezon in 2003, in an attack that activists blamed on retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan.

Charges include extortion, estafa, proposing coup d'etat

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YESTERDAY FILED charges of extortion, estafa and "proposal to commit coup d'etat" against former assemblyman Homobono Adaza and four ex-military officers.

Adaza and his companions denied the charges, claiming they were illegally arrested. They posted a bail bond of P92,000.

The five were arrested at the Corsair Plaza Hotel in Pasig City last Wednesday on the strength of a complaint by a lawyer, Raymund Fortun, who claimed that the group was trying to extort money from his client, a Japanese businessman, and conspiring to hatch a coup against the Arroyo government.

Fortun and Adaza are representing clients at odds over how to settle a legal squabble for control of a beach resort.

Senior State Prosecutor Desamond Velasco claimed that Adaza, together with Lieutenant Commander Hussein Magsalin, Erick Andres and Conor dela Rama, and former police Capt. Rafael Castillo, had violated their right to undergo preliminary investigation and immediately brought the case to court.

Velasco brushed off comments that the case had been rushed, saying "it wouldn't be up to them (Adaza's group) to prove that they did not avail of a preliminary investigation."

Velasco said "coup planning" was punishable by up to 12 years in prison in Bangkal in a bukidnon offense.

Charges of "obstruction of justice through harboring a fugitive" were also filed against the group since they were caught in the company of Castillo, who is wanted for the murder of Young Officers Union (YOU) spokesperson Rene Lorenzana.

All five suspects, added Velasco, would also be charged with estafa, "which need not undergo preliminary investigation," and possibly extortion and grave threats.

Adaza, in lawyer, should be suspended after he and his wife were Castillo to authorities, Velasco said.

Proposal to commit coup d'etat is punished by Article 136 of the Revised Penal Code. "The mere planning of a coup is already a crime. One need not actually attack a government installation, proposing a coup could suffice," he explained.

Justice Minita Lucarillo, an employee of Fortun's client Montecal Sakamoto, was said to have helped set up the extortionist operation.

Lucarillo, in her affidavit, said that during her meeting with Adaza's group, she was asked to convince her employer to "invest" in the coup they were planning.

When asked how much they would need, the group allegedly said it would cost $4 million and added that "the possibility of its success is 100 percent."

They also allegedly told her that the "new government" would give her Japanese employer "special preferential treatment" to enhance business operations.

Fortun said the group offered him the post of justice secretary.

Meanwhile, current Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said it would be up to the court to determine "if there was an coup proposed at all, but only an attempt or frustrated coup d'etat per perusal."

Gonzalez said he did not believe that Adaza, whom he said he "knows very well," could single-handedly mastermind a coup plot, but added that the former lawmaker could probable plan cooperate with "rightists" and "adventurers," in the military.

"I don't think for last five-dyear to be a mastermind. But his sympathies are with the other group [of rightists]," he added.

Meanwhile, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday that solons should not leave home unarmed because he was only meeting with his clients.

Pimentel, who visited Adaza at the PNP Hospital, said his old friend was in high spirits. "He is still in a fighting and talkative mood. I don't think he would launch a coup," Pimentel said.

The senator expressed fears that what happened to Adaza—his arrest based on a complaint from a single individual—might "also happen to other lawmakers in the country."

Pimentel said Adaza was only meeting with his clients, who happen to have been accused of planning coups in the past.

"I don't think its right to jail a lawyer even if their clients are so-called rebels. When you practice criminal law you cannot avoid dealing with criminals or suspected criminals," he said.

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Palace: We're not sleeping

By Christine O. Avendaño

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EDUARDO ERMITA said yesterday the Palace was aware of destabilization plots that would be timed with the President's State of the Nation address (Sona) on July 28.

Ermita said the Palace was "not overly concerned" because security forces were "not sleeping on the job."

Police last Wednesday arrested opposition leader Homobono Adaza, three ex-military officers and an active colonel for allegedly using his own funds to support a new coup attempt against the Arroyo government.

The Palace knows that there are groups that are planning to stage protest rallies when President Arroyo delivers her address to Congress at the end of the month, Ermita said.

There will be demonstrations, he added, "but we are not as much worried."

"We have advanced information. That's the advantage with being in the administration," Ermita told reporters after attending the welcome ceremonies at the Bahay ng Pangulo hosting Senator Benigno Aquino.

Ermita noted that dissidents "tried to choose a different date" to launch their destabilization attempts, such as May 1 and the anniversary of the Edsa people power revolution.

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ZTE whistle-blower faces perjury raps

By Allison W. Lopez

FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF Mike Defensor has slapped perjury charges against whistle-blower Rodolfo "Boy" Lozada Jr. at the Manila City Prosecutor's Office for his supposedly conflicting statements in the Senate and the Court of Appeals.

In his six-page complaint-affidavit filed on Thursday, Defensor accused the ex-president of Philippine Forest Corp. of giving inconsistent statements in the May 13 CA hearing of his petition for writ of habeas corpus and writ of amparo that differed from his narration at the Senate on Feb. 11.

The controversial witness to the $329-million deal with ZTE Corp. had claimed that former Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, among others, took substantial bribes for the project.

Defensor, who appeared at the Senate on Feb. 8, said Lozada initially validated his story that he went to Dr. Lo Sallo Green Hills to check on his condition, advised him to hold a press conference if he did not want to appear before the Senate, and deny that he was kidnapped since he was free to move.

At the Senate, Lozada also reportedly admitted that the P50,000 cash Defensor gave him was for help.

Changed tunes

But the witness apparently changed tunes at the CA by claiming that Defensor "convinced him to lie and say he was not kidnapped," and that "he did not know anything about the NBN-ZTE deal."

"Mr. Lozada's testimony before the Senate signed literally deviated from that he gave before the Court of Appeals. In the Senate, he stated that I asked him to deny that he was kidnapped, in the CA however, he said I asked him to deny any knowledge about the NBN-ZTE deal," said the complainant.

Defensor said his lawyers pointed out that Lozada could be held liable for perjury under Art. 183 of the Revised Penal Code for "committing falsehoods under oath."

"The statement of Mr. Lozada before the Senate and the appellate court are clearly contradictory and cannot be reconciled. After exhibiting the completeness of my story before the Senate, Mr. Lozada cannot thereafter change its tenor in the court hoping without being held liable for perjury," he said.

Defensor added that Lozada's "lies" in the CA was done in "bad faith and ill-motive" to get the sympathy of the public against him.

Crucial issues top agenda of CBCP plenary

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, THE MINING industry, environment concerns, the rural poor and the state of the agricultural industry are among the crucial topics the country's Catholic bishops will discuss during their Plenary Assembly this weekend.

Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, the spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, and Nueva Segovia Bishop Renato Villena said the 135-strong CBCP might issue statements on the ruling Arroyo administration's anti-life and reproductive health issues.

Bishops in the provinces have almost always led campaigns against mining, as shown in the campaign against Australia's Lafayette Mining Ltd., which owned the Rapu-Rapu mine in Bonsogon province.

Recently, several members of the Catholic community, including CBCP president and Cotabato Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, blasted mining and illegal logging for the flash floods in the provinces that was hit by Typhoon "Frank" recently.

Villena said the bishops would also discuss and possibly issue a statement on reproductive health, saying they have been alarmed by the numbers of what he considered as "anti-life" bills in Congress.

The Plenary Assembly is CBCP's highest decision-making body. Composed of active and retired bishops, the Plenary Assembly meets in regular session twice a year, in January and in July. Ariel Ito L. Alave

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Manny to carry RP flag in Beijing Olympics

By Michael Lim Ubac

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY—Another Manny Pacquiao.

The newly crowned World Boxing Council lightweight champion has a new title under his belt—Special Envoy of the President to the 2008 Beijing Olympics—and his first task is to carry the national colors at the games' opening flag ceremony.

President Macapagal-Arroyo conferred the honorific title on Pacquiao yesterday during their meeting in Malacañang after the latter arrived from Los Angeles, California.

At their meeting, the beaming Ms Arroyo threw out a few jabs to mimic Pacquiao's lethal punches that knocked out David Diaz in Las Vegas.

Giving back the honor

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that as ambassador, Pacquiao would carry the national flag at the Olympics' opening ceremony, which Ms Arroyo herself will attend upon the invitation of Chinese President Hu Jintao.

"Can you imagine the one that will hold the flag ... is a Filipino world champion?" said Ermita, who was himself a boxer in his younger days. "Another reason Pacquiao, imagine that ,also (he) is very religious (he has swept everything)."

"For the honor he has given the Filipino people, the President gave back the honor to him," Ermita added.

Pacquiao later told reporters in Filipino: "I will carry the flag of the Philippines, that's really true."

Possible fight with Valero

In their one-on-one meeting, Pacquiao said he and Ms Arroyo talked about the Diaz fight.

"She told me about my fight and left puzzles that knocked out (Diaz). She even showed me how it did it," Pacquiao said.

At a press conference, Pacquiao talked of the possibility of a match with the undefeated southpaw boxer Edwin Valero, the World Boxing Association super feather weight champion.

He made a joke about Valero's unblemished record of 24 wins, all by knockout.

"I told him the people he had beaten were all retreats (fetreta)," Pacquiao quipped. "But that will be a good fight. We can fight anytime ... Our paths will eventually cross."

Will pursue studies

Pacquiao said he would have to give up his 130-pound WBC belt as a result of his victory over Diaz. "I need to, I can't hold on to two divisions," he said.

He also said he would continue with his studies—he is taking up accounting course at Mariano Marcos University—despite the lethal punches that knocked out his opponents.

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Manny back, gives ₱3M …

Front page A1

said he was also organizing a fund-raising concert for them.

Showing its gratitude for the honor he brought to the country, Malacañang announced that President Macapagal-Arroyo had named him Special Envoy to the 2008 Beijing Olympics—meaning he would carry the Philippine flag at the August Olympics. (See boxed story.)

In the afternoon, with no huge crowds facing Mount Mihara's uproars, Pacquiao breezed through the motorcade in his featured motorcade yet.

On board an olive-colored jeep festooned with Philippine flags and turned into a float, Pacquiao showed off the four belts representing the championships he had won with his patron fans in four boxing divisions.

Pacquiao returned five days after wresting the World Boxing Council lightweight crown from Mexican-American David Diaz by a knockout in Las Vegas.

Skirting the slums

Fellow Senate Deputy Leo Lorenzo, who defeated the United States' Steve Quinsayer in the Pacquiao-Diaz undercard, rode with him on the float.

But there was none of the boisterous street celebration that marked his previous motorcades through the metropolis' meanest streets and well-guarded enclaves.

Yesterday's convoy took a different route, skirting the slums of Tondo and the Ilang-Ilang Barangay Chinatown.

"There is nothing to road in it," Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, one of the boxing superstar's chief supporters told the Inquirer, referring to the less crowded streets in the area. "This is a day of joy and glory for Manny."

Atienza said lack of preparation and the unclean route of the motorcade might have been the reason why relatively small crowds—except perhaps in the Intramuros area—showed up.

Later, Pacquiao merely smiled when asked about the absence of large crowds in his motorcade.

From the Department of Environment and Natural Resources offices in Quezon City where Pacquiao breezed with Atienza, the motorcade rolled down Elipanita and Quezon Avenue and on down Western, Mercor Bayer Rivers, Heroes, Lucena Street and 8th Avenue before through the Maharlika Highway.

The 50-vehicle convoy took just an hour to reach Malacañang.

From there, Pacquiao got off the float and jumped into his car to the convoy down to Pasig.

During the motorcade, Pacquiao cheerfully waved at people, listening his championship belts one at a time for them to see.

The biggest crowd, in the hundreds, seemed to have gathered in Sampaloc, where people erupted into cheers.

There, motorists stopped, office workers took breaks from their work, and residents stepped out of their homes to applaud Pacquiao. Most cheered the name while teenage girls shrieked. Others applauded from office windows.

'Uneventful blur'

Two boys emerged from their motorbikes' helmets and chased the motorcade.

The boys were spotted a lady dashing out of a police for a quick look but the leaning decorated had already passed by.

At Malate, the motorcade passed through Apolo Avenue in an uneventful blur.

There aren't much cheering, although a smattering of cheers of "Manny!" were heard as Pacquiao waved as dozens of office workers, businessmen and commuters on the sidewalk.

One of the first things Pacquiao did on his return was to hear Mass with his wife Jinkee at the Shrine is Quiapo Church in Manila, where a throng of supporters welcomed him.

Msgr. Jose Clemente Ignacio, who officiated the Mass, hailed Pacquiao as "a man with a good heart."

"I'm happy because you're back a) prayerful [man], you continue to sacrifice for your country and you show gratitude to God through the Thanksgiving Masses you offer every time you come home from a fight," Ignacio said. "(My) also welcomed here) connected you away toward pace (mother (Dionisia) where you approached him as he lay on the floor."

The priest was referring to Pacquiao's pursuits of trying to lift up Diaz after knocking him out in the 9th round.

"Manny, you're already rich and famous, and you build a lot of (this). You're considered a national treasure and many people look up and want to be like you. But remember, God doesn't look at all these. What's inside our hearts, not the physical or material things, are the most important," the priest said.

He advised Pacquiao: "Enrich your heart with love and open a specialty to the needy. There is a reason why you have been receiving all these [blessings]."

Pickpockets at work

Pickpockets took advantage of the Quiapo mob. At least two television cameramen covering the event later realized that their cellphones were missing.

At the DENR office, Pacquiao was treated like the king that he is.

The employees, who either skipped or delayed lunch, rolled out the red carpet. Throngs greeted him with loud music, cheers and confetti of red, blue and white.

Several employees thanked Pacquiao for making while sets are brought with them boxing gloves and old photos taken with the man he has autograph.

"Your prayers are very important to me," Pacquiao told the crowd. "My triumph is your triumph."

In an interview, Pacquiao vowed to be the champion of social welfare rehabilitation, promising he had donated P200,000 for the protection of the Philippine eagle and of Mindoro's tarsiers.

He had also promised to help fight illegal loggers.

Sharing his blessings

Reiterating he wanted more than eager to share his blessings with the victims of "Frank."

Announcing his plan to donate P1 million to the victims, he said: "I have talked it over with my wife, and we decided to give P1 million as our way of helping them."

Sporting a striped white and blue shirt and jeans, Pacquiao was met at the airport by his three children—Michael, Jinnel and Princess—and by officials and airport employees.

He was accompanied by an entourage of supporters, including relatives and ex-fiancé Jinkee Clavio Pacquiao.

Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

"I thank all Filipinos who supported me and prayed for this victory. Don't worry, my head is okay now," Pacquiao said in Filipino, chuckling, referring to his hand that swelled after he had pounded Diaz-ratch is

Fund raising for victims

Aside from the P1 million donation, Pacquiao said he also planned to hold a fund-raising concert for the typhoon victims, as well as a **telethon to generate more funds.**

"I will also try to make the people in the affected provinces, particularly Iloilo City, to see what else I can do," he said.

Should he allow his sons to follow in his footsteps?

"I don't want them to go into boxing ... they'll just get hurt," he said. —With reports from Ed Rep, Jeannette I. Andrade and Beverly T. Nebblad

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From : USC Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Students

GMA launches 1st ship off Subic Hanjin shipyard

REDONDO PENINSULA, SUBIC BAY Freeport—Three days after the vessel to BenDiesel oil engine for the hundredth diesel and running from the 30-hand MV Princess of the Stars, President Macapagal-Arroyo stood here to be the "godmother" of the container vessel MV Arguillas, the first ship that the Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Philippines Inc. built in its shipyard on Subic Bay.

After a short speech, Ms Arroyo brought down a small wooden tee that cut a void to the MV Arguillas, signaling that it was ready to sail.

"I name this vessel Arguillas. May God bless this vessel and all who sail on her," Ms Arroyo said from the makeshift stage across the ship. Then the ship horn sounds blew loud as fog horn amid the flurry of hundreds of released balloons.

"This very first ship that sails out of Hanjin shipyard, the largest ship ever built in the Philippines, MV Arguillas, is a marvelous showcase of sound engineering and design completed six months ahead of schedule, and it's a container carrier all of 41,000 tons. It brings pride to its owners. It brings pride to its owners. It brings pride to its owners. It brings pride to us as the team of its owners," she said in her speech.

Hyoun, the praised Filipino workers, owning the hardest applause here from when she remarked, "It is a display of our countrymen's skills and work ethics. You are not only skilled, you're also hardworking and caring."

She congratulated HHIC-Philippines for the "milestone achievement in shipbuilding."

She also commended the Good Sun, Dewey Maninisor Corp., which commissioned the company to build its ships—the first batch that HHIC Philippines will roll out until 2009—worth some $1.1 billion.

Two grandmothers (Chinese) owners, Michie Pipuchanmuoy and his wife, the sponsor chair, Elizabit, were on scene to thank HHIC Philippines and Ms Arroyo.

Daniel Pajaubalasian said the occasion was part of the modernization program of his family's fleet of ships.

"Hanjin, after building a cutting-edge ship used to Subic in three years, was able to produce the first state-of-the-art ship in the country and is now prepared to take its maiden voyage," he said. *Tonette Orejas and Robert Gonzaga's, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Sotto joins Cabinet; revamp seen

SONARIO SEE VICENTE SOTTO III got his wish yesterday after President Macapagal-Arroyo signed his appointment as the new head of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB).

Sotto's appointment signaled the start of the continuing Cabinet revamp scheduled to allow many of defeated Team Unity (TU) senatorial candidates in the 2007 elections into the official family of President Arroyo.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he personally informed Sotto of his new designation over lunchtime Australia X., whose term expired yesterday.

"Sir (Sotto) came to my office. I gave him his appointment papers (only yesterday)," Ermita told reporters.

The position of DDB chair has a rank of secretary.

Sotto said he was glad to rejoin the government to continue his long crusade against dangerous drugs. He said he would immediately plunge into work.

"This is enough job," Sotto said.

Sotto, one of the losing senatorial candidates last year and a former Senate majority leader, said last month that President Macapagal-Arroyo had asked him to join the Cabinet to curb some bad guys.

He said he preferred to be in the Congress. Drugs Board "if only to have the law (the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) fully implemented."

Sotto said he could not serve as chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency so his staff cited the law that created the office.

Asked about the possibility of the entry into the Cabinet of the other Team Unity candidates vanquished by the President, Ermita said: "Highly probable. Why not?"

Although he did not say that it's a form of political payback for TU members, Ermita said Ms Arroyo did not forget their loyalty and support to her administration.

Despite the administration's vaunted political resolution, only Senator Edgardo Angara, Juan Arroyo and Juan Miguel Zubiri, a former congressman from Bukidnon, made it to the Magic 12.

Ermita mentioned the names of Michael Defensor, former Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay and former Senator Ralph Recto and Benin Aquino Cabinet probable replacements for when outgoing or unperforming high officials in the administration. *Michael Lim Ubay*

University of the Philippines Law Center
INSTITUTE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION
[illegible]

Chiz doubts Jocjoc accounts have cash

By Gil Cabacungan and Jaymon Reing

SEN. FRANCIS "CHIZ" ESCUDERO doubts whether the 70 bank accounts of former Agriculture Secretary Joselito "Jocjoc" Bukidnon and his cohorts in the P728-million fertilizer fraud scam still have cash.

"After a long lapse of time, is there even money left in those accounts?" asked Escudero a day after the appellate court granted the petition of the Anti-Money Laundering Council to freeze the bank accounts in 17 banks and insurance firms in the country.

The Senate ruler came after the CA found probable cause that the funds could be tied to the diversion of fertilizer funds to the 2004 election campaigns.

Escudero said the government should not pursue its Bukidnon case any longer because when he was there acted on despite a preliminary report indicting Bukidnon.

The Senate panel's Field Investigation Office (FIO), has recommended the filing of criminal charges against Bukidnon for violation of the anti-graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Meanwhile, Action Secretary Food Gonzalez yesterday said the Senate ruler would not be used by Bukidnon as proof that he is being prosecuted by the government.

"I don't think that the action of AMLC can be considered political per se. [The drive against] money laundering is a worldwide thing," Gonzalez told reporters.

He added that Bukidnon alleged involvement in the P728-million fertilizer scam would be used as one of the reasons to press for his extradition.

Bukidnon had left the country in 2005 for the United States after being summoned by the Senate to its investigation of the fertilizer scam.

He had sought political asylum there, citing political persecution. But a US immigration court last month rejected his request. He has appealed the decision.

Gonzalez denied the government is politically prosecuting Bukidnon.

"I don't think he's being politically prosecuted but he's at least being asked to account for those huge amounts from the fertilizer fund," Gonzalez said. "If he can be cleared of [himself on these allegations, he'll be won free, but he has to go through the process," he said.

Gonzalez said that if Bukidnon loses his appeal to seek political asylum in the US, the former undersecretary would be readily deported because there would be no legal basis for him to remain in the US. The Philippine government, therefore, would not need to seek his extradition, Gonzalez said.

"We can't have him extradited [and] that request for asylum is denied with finality, although [when this happens] he would no longer be entitled to stay in the US and he would have to be deported," he said.

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New Comelec execs hit back at critics

By Kristine L. Alave

THE TWO NEW ELECTION COMmissioners yesterday brushed off the opposition to their appointment.

Commissioners Lucenito Tagle and Leonardo Leonida said it was unfair that some civil society groups and politicians would question their credentials and appointment to the constitutional body.

"They should give us time to prove ourselves," Tagle said in an interview in his empty office at the Comelec in Intramuros, Manila.

Leonida, a Moslem Regional Trial Court judge and now First Division associate, said he applied for the position late last year.

He noted that he has never been an administrative case before the Supreme Court, dismissing reports that he faced an malfeasance case.

But he admitted being investigated for allegedly misusing reference scholarships he received at the Legazpi Regional Trial Court but that not being cases out of it.

Last Thursday, Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. raised questions on the appointments of Tagle and Leonida, saying there appeared to be "many qualified" candidates than them.

He demanded that the President disclose why the former justice and judge were assigned to one of the most scrutinized and important agencies in the country.

There were also sentiments that the new Comelec officials were unfamiliar and were new in the deadline recommended by the search committee to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita defended the appointments of Tagle and Leonida by saying it was the President's prerogative to choose and appoint officials she wants for the post.

"It's not a matter of who is better known, well known or not known and now from where I sit. Be thing that comes into mind that's the prerogative of the President because the guy who gets appointed doesn't have to have some reputation before. The President knows and she has her own criteria for making the final choice. That's her prerogative. This is not a popularity contest," he said.

Ermita said Mr. Arroyo was exercising the authority given to her under the Constitution.

On reports that Leonida had a pending court case, Ermita said the new Comelec commissioner had shown him a document where the Supreme Court cleared him of any court case.

He added that the report said the case was filed by Leonida's estranged wife who told him the two are separated.

With a report by Christina O. Anonuevo

De Villa now heads poll watchdog

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEment for Free Elections (Namfrel) has a new head.

She is former Senator Sixto Antonio Brawner de Villa, who also chairs the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).

De Villa said there is no conflict in choosing PPCRV, the Commission on Election's civil society partner in the Aug. 11 elections to Muslim Mindanao, and Namfrel as both groups have the same goal of achieving fraud-free elections in the Philippines.

De Villa said in a statement today that she was effectively volunteered to be the 2008 head and that she was honored and humbled to be elected as chairman of the citizens' group that has contributed so much to Philippine history and democracy.

For her first order of business as Namfrel chairman, De Villa ordered a draft on the terms of the organization for the upcoming automated barangay (Region of Muslim Mindanao) elections.

From negotiating the quick counts, which made Namfrel famous, the group should now "repackage" itself by taking on the role of an external auditor to the automated results, De Villa said.

De Villa called on the Comelec to provide audit guidelines for the electronic polls in ARMM.

Kristine L. Alave

THE JOHN MAXWELL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT VIDEO BROADCAST
THE LEADERSHIP EFFECT: BUILDING R.E.A.L. LEADERS

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DATE: July 29, 2008
TIME: 10:00AM - 5:00PM
VENUE: Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati City

PROGRAM SCHEDULE
10:00am - 12:00nn Session 1: Leadership and Real Success
12:00nn - 01:30pm Lunch
01:30pm - 03:00pm Session 2: Leadership Gold
03:00pm - 03:15pm Break
03:15pm - 04:30pm Session 3: Five Levels of Leadership
04:30pm - 05:00pm LIVE Leadership Talk by Alex Castillo

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INSPIRE

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, July 5, 2008
13th Week in Ordinary Time
Anthony Mary Zaccaria
1st Reading Am 9:11-15
Gospel Mt 9:14-17

The disciples of John came to him with the question, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast so many occasions, but not your disciples?"

Jesus answered them, "How can you expect wedding guests to mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? Their will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

"No one patches an old coat with a piece of unshrunken cloth, for the patch will shrink and tear an even bigger hole in the coat. Nor does one drink put new wine in old wineskins. If you do, the wineskins will burst and the wine be spilt. No, you put new wine in fresh skins: then both are preserved."

COMMENTARY

Just as Israel never rejoiced over unbelief, so does the Good News of Jesus request any kind of mourning. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are reminds, for sure, we have reborn so as to be made capable of overcoming the darkness of grace that God intends for us.

What are we to do in the absence of the one and only God? Jesus, as we thoroughly baptized, the sacrament that unites, inspired us and confirmed us as to the Lord Jesus, thus giving us access to the "new wine" of the Kingdom of God.

Clarissa Christian Center Foundation, Inc. is located at 139 Edsa, Barangka, Mandaluyong City. Mail it to P.O. Box 1000, Greenhills Post Office, San Juan, Metro Manila. Tel. No. (02) 727-0000. Email: [illegible] Website: [illegible] Clarissa Christian Center is a member of Christian Ministries in the Philippines (CMP). Clarissa Christian Center is also a member of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC). Clarissa Christian Center is a member of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC). Clarissa Christian Center is a member of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

Nene to press NorthRail probe

SEN. AQUILINO "NOYNOY" PIMENTEL JR. yesterday said the Senate will pursue its probe of the ₱500-million North Luzon Railway project (NorthRail) following fresh allegations that government officials pocketed ₱150 million in bribes and that the government had been paying ₱1 million a day in interest in the much-delayed project.

"The alleged bribe and the fact the NorthRail's construction is already delayed by more than three years should prod the Senate to investigate the railway project and to review the terms and conditions of the country's agreement with the Chinese government which is financing the project," said Pimentel in a statement.

Pimentel called lawyer Henry Sugue's claims of a ₱200-million bribe as "very disturbing" and a Senate probe should provide him with the proper venue to prove his claims.

"We need evidence of Atty. Sugue's claims. It's a serious charge. If [it] is not proven, it may mean implanting important evidence. The Senate should investigate this deal," Pimentel said.

Earlier, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile (not shown) filed Senate Senate Speaker Jose de Venecia had brokered the deal between the Philippines and China. GEC Cebuanogen.ch

DNA testing kits expected next week; victims' kin go home

By Ronnie Hapallcao
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—WITH THE DNA testing kits required for corpse identification still en route, many out-of-town relatives of the missing passengers of the MV Princess of the Stars yesterday had to look to their homes.

Earlier, the National Bureau of Investigation stopped the public viewing of the family's remaining unidentified corpses, saying these could only be identified through DNA testing.

In Bicol, 1,080 families in Legazpi City, Albay province, and 3,000 DNA kits were expected next week.

He said the relatives may return by then. Buses will be provided by the provincial government to transport those coming from Cebu province.

Cam said that while the taking of blood samples did not entail a lengthy process, the processing would be condemned to failure, the capital city of Roxas and Hermosa, and would take weeks.

He said five will go to Bicol one to which to carry the corpses more than expected from Thailand.

Of the total 173 corpses brought to the city, only six have been identified, according to Rolf Antolin, funeral counselor of the the Metropolitan Funeral Homes.

Antolin said the bodies of Raul Lubrica, 54, of Catagbacan, Leon, Iloilo), Leonardo Ramos (Capitol Drive, Batasan City), Esmeralda Lipigas (2 Padilla Street, Cebu City), Arabel Bautistan (Zamboanga City), Felipe Orlandia (Digger, North Cotabato) and Robert Ong (Dumaguete City) had been released to their families.

Relatives' stay only till Sunday

The relatives of the other missing passengers have until Sunday to stay at the Cebu City's action center, Urgello Generoso Cardino said.

Cardino, who chairs the city's Disaster and Coordinating Council, said the P5.6-million budget for the action center's operations would last only until that day.

Starting Monday, the action center will serve as a one-stop shop to be managed by government agencies tasked to process the families' insurance claims. It will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Most of the relatives who left yesterday came from cities and towns in Cebu province, social welfare officer Grace Viana said.

She said those who chose to stay until Sunday were waiting to receive the P100,000 in financial aid from President Macapagal-Arroyo and the P200,000 insurance from the shipowner, Sulpicio Lines Inc.

As many as 111 relatives have received the P10,000 financial aid from the Office of the President. Their claims were processed by the DSWD.

Viana said the DSWD had also forwarded to Sulpicio Lines the names of at least 20 relatives eligible to receive the P200,000 insurance.

Sibuyan islanders lauded as 'the best face' of a nation

Story, page A2

seven 12-days after Fuentes's landing waters amid the passenger vessel owned by Sulpicio Lines Inc. and destroyed homes and schools close to the shore.

"Before our if I weren't able to bring food to them, we would only ... I'm very happy to see the people so high," said Cardona, who arrived some seven hours later than scheduled because of bad weather.

During his briefing ring Gordon distributed Red Cross relief packs to residents and posed for pictures with them. But he stressed that his visit should not be taken as political gimmick.

"I never here as a politician go giving dole-outs ... I'm not expecting you to give me anything in return," he said.

'Passive' shipowner

Gordon also met with military personnel stationed on neighboring Tablas Island in an informal troop inspection before boarding his chartered flight back to Manila.

In an emergency meeting yesterday with the oil spill response team of the Coast Guard's Marine Environmental Protection Command, Sen. Fernando Mayor Noemy Domingo lamented that Sulpicio Lines had yet to extend financial assistance to the town since the Princess of the Stars sank on June 21.

Tarandang said the local government had been paying for all the expenses related to the ship's sinking, including the measures it was taking to prevent a possible oil spill in the Sibuyan sea.

"Sulpicio Lines is too passive," the mayor said.

She said the company had been sending mere observers with no power to make decisions on such matters as San Fernando's financial needs.

"They send people here who cannot decide [on their own]," she said, adding that the town's fund is limited and that it would not travel to Manila just to seek help from Sulpicio Lines.

Tarandang called on the shipping company to send cash through its people because there is not a single bank in the town.

She said the money would be used to prepare and purchase materials that would contain a possible oil spill from the sunken ship.

Barangay Tubigan, Espada, Poblacion and Pili are in danger of being affected by an oil spill, Tarandang said.

She also said the possibility of a damage suit against Sulpicio Lines was being studied.

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There is still no confirmation that one of the 14 bodies recovered on Thursday in waters off Sibuyan was that of the ship captain, Florencio Maninang Jr.

"We could not yet confirm if it was the captain, because there was no identification available and we were pressured from exploiting further because it would pose danger to our health," said Jean de Jesus Bartiza, municipal assistant welfare and development officer of Magdiwang town.

"We were told not to get the silt, please announce and just rely on the explosive issued by Sulpicio Lines," Bartiza said.

Volunteer worker Rodney Calicho had said the body he retrieved to be that of Mariano was wearing a tie jacket and loose keys and a cell phone.

Anniversary sentiments

The body also had a tattoo on the left shoulder depicting a dagger, anchor and with the inscription "valor," said Mary Jane Martinez Rocos, former councilwoman of Magdiwang and woman person of the Coast Guard.

Church people have decried the monstrous that presented the Sibuyan townsfolk from expressing their sentiments during the Mass attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday in Alto Calabangbang, Barangay Tubtubi.

They said the Mass had no homily and the choir was told to sing only the "Sana Buong Buhay Isalang" because the chapter, who came with the President to celebrate the Mass, told them that her time was "limited."

They added that the organizers of the Mass might have limited Ms Arroyo's stay but the event be "diverted" by those who chose to say strongly against running, as what happened during the earlier visit of the President Noli de Castro.

"If the President is not ready for protests, she might as well resign. The presiding officer of the Mass is Jesus, not anyone else. If the Mass was banned, then there should be no Mass," said Fr. Louie Ormoc, SJ), the parish priest of St. Thomas of the Child Jesus in Barangay Lambing first, Calbiga-an town.

Ormoc said he was in his parish on Thursday when he was told about the Tuesday Mass. He said the people wanted for almost two hours to receive the P10,000 in financial aid from President Macapagal-Arroyo and the P200,000 insurance from the shipowner, Sulpicio Lines Inc.

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Story, page A2

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Del Monte summoned to explain toxic cargo

Story, page A2

moves pertaining to the dangerous shipment," Matta said at yesterday's hearing.

He said the BAR would likewise summon representatives of Bayer Philippines and its broker Eco Logistics to explain their one shipment of crop protection chemicals.

"Bayer informed us that they had certain chemicals on board [the ship] that were considered dangerous," he said.

According to Sulpicio Lines spokesperson officer Tomas Gutierrez Jr., the pesticide cargo was considered an ordinary shipment because of the absence of stickers or signs indicating that it was dangerous.

Concerns said dangerous shipments such as toxic chemicals were loaded in Sulpicio Liner cargo ships.

But Siamese Del Monte did not indicate that enclosed was highly dangerous, the pesticide was transported on board the passenger ship, he said.

Transit cargo

"In all of their documents, [Del Monte] did not refer to it as chemicals as highly toxic. So we were not able to segregate the shipment consisting the submarine and hand it in another cargo vessel instead of the Princess of the Stars," Gutierrez said.

He said the pesticide, which was imported from abroad, had been classified as transit cargo.

"Transit cargoes are usually racked to their destination. Originally, the [embedded] shipment was supposed to be transported via the Princess of Paradise, but we decided to load it into the Princess of the Stars which was leaving earlier," he said.

Victoria Lim Florido, Sulpicio Lines lawyer and spokesperson, stressed that it was the duty of the shipping line to get cargo to its destination or the earliest possible time.

"There was an indication from the shipper [Del Monte] to rush the cargo," Florido said.

Edgar Go, Sulpicio Lines vice president and owner, said the company learned that the ship was carrying highly toxic chemicals from news reports after the June 21 sinking of the Princess of the Stars.

"We immediately called up the shippers, and they admitted that those were indeed chemicals," Go told the BAR.

When asked by BAR members why the company did not research on the ill effects of pesticides, Sulpicio Lines legal counsel Arthur Lim said a check with online and print sources yielded only highly technical definitions of the substance.

10-day deadline

In an interview with reporters, Macaraeg said concerns over the classification of cargo weight inside the Princess of the Stars. He said the weight of individual cargo should have been indicated in the cargo manifest.

He added that the BAR was trying its best to come up with findings and recommendations next week, in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive for them to conclude the hearings in 10 days.

"We are trying to comply with the order, but we need a little more time," said Nasir Adiz, Bureau Living, the BAR chair.

Living said the board was planning to seek an extension from Ms Arroyo in order to come up with better recommendations.

He said the board was also planning to go to Cebu to interview members of the tragedy.

Emotional

"We need to talk to passengers who survived. So far we have only examined one of the ship's crew members who was able to escape death," Living said.

At the hearing, BRI member Commodore Arnulfo Romillo has seemed of his emotions while interrogating Sulpicio Lines safety officer Nelson Morales.

Romillo became upset when he learned that Morales left the company radio operator in Manila to contact the Princess of the Seas "during the most crucial hours from 1 to 6 a.m." of June 21, when Typhoon "Frank" was raging.

"Show some interest in the people closest to you on ship," Romillo told Morales, his voice breaking.

Turning to the board members, he said: "I'm sorry I got so emotional because of this."

Romillo said that as the safety officer, Morales had a job to make sure that ships were safe when at sea.

"Is that how you operate in Sulpicio?" he said.

Morales replied that he had made sure the ship was safe when it left the port. With *reports from Christine S. Enguero*

Sulpicio seeks help of bishop

Story, page A2

to passenger vessels to sail again.

Pueblos also defended the company from calls that it should be closed. If that were to happen, the economy of Mindoro will suffer, he said.

The bishop said he spoke with no unidentified Mindoro-based official only this week in behalf of the shipping company.

"I went to Mahacañang the other day because of the responses of the owner of Sulpicio Lines, because this is the only livelihood they have," he said.

Pueblos said he knew the Gothong family because they belonged to the same spiritual group.

Sulpicio Lines is one of the country's major cargo handlers, and is said to be responsible for ferrying about 40 percent of the cargo load nationwide.

As passengers vessels and cargo fleet were grounded immediately after the June 21 sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars, but President Macapagal-Arroyo has allowed its cargo operations to resume on Thursday.

Mixed weather warnings

Pueblos said he took up the cudgels for Sulpicio Lines because, as it was explained to him by the Go family, the sinking of the ship was due to the mixed weather warnings issued by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

He said that while he was aware that Sulpicio Lines was at fault, it was assured that the company had invested in and improved its ships.

Pueblos said Mahacañang's exertion to the Go family's request was positive because of its effect on the regional economy.

He said the closure of the company would severely affect the economy in Mindoro—something that, he said, the administration was worried about.

"It is only Sulpicio Lines that can take our commodities from Mindoro to Cebu," he said.

'No lobbying'

But when asked in connection on Pueblos' claim, Mahacañang denied that Sulpicio Lines or any of its agents had lobbied for the resumption of its operations.

"No lobbying of Sulpicio in the Palace," Anthony Golez, the President's deputy spokesperson, said in a series of text messages on Thursday.

Golez said Ms Arroyo's decision to allow the company's cargo vessels to sail anew had not been influenced by the bishop's intervention.

"We don't know if the recommendation was already given before his visit," Golez said when asked if he knew that Pueblos had visited the Palace for his stated purpose.

"That's why I am referring you to the DOTC (Department of Transportation and Communications) because they will be the agency who will give the recommendation," he said.

Golez did not respond anymore when asked about Pueblos' claim that Mahacañang's resolution was "positive" in the Go family's request.

Church calls

Recently, top officials of the Catholic Church joined calls to sanction Sulpicio Lines in the wake of the ship sinking.

Cebu archbishop Archbishop Oscar Cruz said it seemed that the shipping company should be in the funeral industry because of the amount of loss lost in its business.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales said Sulpicio Lines should shift its business to another industry because of its disastrous maritime record.

'Pregnant man' in Oregon gives birth to girl

Story, page A2

He announced worldwide announcement in April after revealing his pregnancy.

The baby, examined through artificial insemination using donor sperm and Beatie's own eggs, was born on June 29 and Beatie and the baby are "healthy and doing well," People reported.

"I'm only doing different things to what I can't because I feel my baby like a lot of mothers don't," People quoted Beatie as saying. He has had his breasts surgically removed.

How it all began

Beatie told the magazine that because of complications during pregnancy, the baby was not delivered by Caesarean section, but no other details about the birth were given.

The thirty-hearted Beatie told "The Oprah Winfrey Show" in April he began his sexual transformation about 10 years ago when he began taking testosterone treatments and had surgery to remove mammary glands and flatten his chest.

Upon deciding to have a child about two years ago, he halted his hormonally hormone injections and resumed menstruating.

A human need

Beatie was dubbed the "pregnant man" after appearing on Oprah Winfrey's talk show.

"I feel it's not a male or female desire to have a child. It's a human need. I'm a person and I have the right to have a biological child," Beatie told the chat show queen.

Beatie's wife, Nancy, 46, whom he married five years ago, was unable to conceive because of a prior hysterectomy.

Otherwise, he has said, "I cannot do it by myself."

Beatie's spouse has one grown daughter by a previous marriage.

Labor of love

She said on Oprah's show their pastoral relationship be fairly traditional despite her transgender status. "He's going to be the father, and I'm going to be the mother," she said.

The couple, who operate a T-shirt printing business in Bend, Oregon, are legally married and he is recognized under Oregon state law as a man.

Beatie's announced intention first became public when he wrote an article in the leading US gay magazine The Advocate in March, entitled "Labor of Love."

Incredible feeling

He said that accident neighbors, "my wife, Nancy, and I don't appear in the least unusual."

"The situation sparks legal, personal, and social undercurrents," Beatie wrote, adding the couple had experienced opposition from health care professionals, friends and family.

One doctor refused to treat the couple, after consulting an ethics board.

"How does it feel to be a pregnant man? Incredible. Despite the fact that my belly is growing with a new life inside, I am only overwhelmed by feeling like a man that I am," Beatie wrote. *Reports from Reuters and AFP*

GSIS loans for typhoon-hit members

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System said it would provide loans to members who were seriously affected by Typhoons "Frank" and "Cosme."

In a statement, the GSIS said members who work in government offices impacted by the two typhoons last month.

GSIS said those areas, earlier declared to be in a state of emergency due to the typhoons, are Baguio City and the province of Sorsogon, Pangasinan, La Union, Cebu, and Antique.

The emergency loan will carry an interest rate of 8 percent per annum and payable in equal monthly installments for three years. The monthly amortization of P666.69 shall be deducted from the salaries of the borrowers beginning in the fourth month after the loan is released.

Meanwhile, the GSIS reassured its worried wife with the Lopez-controlled Manila Electric Co. as its president and general manager, Oscar Vitaliano Garcia, urged college graduates to take a more proactive approach in preserving what he called the constitutional overhanging and other misdemeanors. Morales has been contending against the 45 million customers.

In a forum on Energy and Economic Rights organized by the Union of Catholic Student Councils of the Philippines (UCSC) at the San Beda College campus in Mendiola, Garcia stressed that through discussions, blogs and other venues, students can make a difference in determining the aligned interest of lifestyles against inconsistencies.

"Heroes awakened, made the power of the youth," Garcia said during the forum. "This country underwent great changes because of student activism."

He explained that no one is spared from the burden of paying a high cost of electricity, even students.

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Trillanes pre-trial reset anew

A MAKATI JUDGE has postponed for the third time the pre-trial of the rebellion case of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and the soldiers who took over the Peninsula Manila Hotel last November.

Judge Elmo Alameda of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 granted the defense motion seeking a recasting of the pre-trial to give the Court of Appeals sufficient time to act on their petition for a restraining order on the proceedings.

In a July 3 order, the court said it was constrained to move the pre-trial to Aug. 13 "in deference to the Court of Appeals and so as not to render moot and academic the petition and the application for the issuance of a temporary restraining order and/or a preliminary injunction."

Trillanes and his co-accused, represented by lawyer Ernesto Francisco, said the CA had been unable to act on their application for a TRO and injunction because of the respondents' failure to file their comment.

They also noted that police officials had not yet produced the documents they had sought "which shall be used in connection with their defense.

Rendered moot

Francisco earlier asked the court to require the police officials to show cause why they should not be cited for contempt for their failure to produce the documents, including after-operations reports, booking and information sheets on the detainees in court.

But Alameda said the motion was rendered moot when the concerned officials finally complied with the order on July 2 when they submitted some of the documents sought as well as a manifestation showing that some of the documents sought were not in their possession.

The pre-trial had been postponed twice already April 21, June 4 and July 3. DJ Yap

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Food for the future

NOTHING THAT FERNANDO M. COJUANGCO JR. said Thursday about the food crisis is new. The observations made by the former politician, who remains active in (frankincense) politics, had been noted before by every government official who spoke on the issue. The big difference, however, is that Cojuangco is putting his money where his mouth is.

EDITORIAL

"There is no more important issue today than food security" said the chair of San Miguel Corp., one of Asia's biggest food and beverage conglomerates. "The defining challenge of the future is to guarantee that people have access to food." Noting that soaring food prices have forced many millions more of the world's poor to go hungry, Cojuangco said that "guaranteeing an adequate supply is an important strategic goal for everyone, not just governments."

Ramon Ang, SMC president, added: "We need to boost agricultural production and help insulate our countrymen from the continued volatility of the commodities market."

How? SMC has a big idea and it is willing to spend big bucks to bring it about. Cojuangco said that the government has identified three million hectares of idle lands that can be planted to various crops, particularly rice, corn, sugarcane, coconut and vegetables. SMC, together with the Malaysian food giant Kuok Group, wants to develop one-third of that, or one million hectares. They plan to invest as much as $1,000 per hectare for their project called "Feeding our Future." And if they guarantee to buy all the produce from the farms that will be developed under the program.

As a matter where the government is gripping for solutions to the food crisis and the growing discontent it has spawned, this new venture offers some relief and hope. Under this proposal the government will keep ownership of the land, while SMC and the Kuok Group will provide financial and technical expertise in developing the lands and then buy all of the produce. Presumably since these are public lands, there will be no problem this time with the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law like SMC had in Sumilao. What the government needs to make sure though is that the farmers who will till the land get a fair return on their labors. Once that is ensured and unless some really nasty devil comes out in the details, the project should get all the encouragement and support it needs from the government, the farmers and the consumers.

The food crisis has dragged on for at least four months now, and the Arroyo administration's responses have consisted mostly of palliatives that offer temporary relief, like the massive emergency importation of rice, a heavy price subsidy to make rice affordable to the poor, and rush doles to lucky families. Of course, President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet continue to talk about the necessity of attaining food self-sufficiency as the clustered panacea. In New York last week as she prepared to return home after her 10-day visit to the United States, Ms Arroyo observed that "the new economics of rice makes it no longer cheapest to import a function [of the country's needs] than to be totally self-sufficient." The administration has even talked about pouring P30 billion into a new program to accelerate rice production. But it has not put forward anything as bold, sure and concrete as the food productive project now being proposed by SMC and the Kuok Group. Unless it has better ideas on how to put idle lands to productive uses, the administration should roll the two-food giants to go full steam ahead.

A world without Filipinos

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

AT THE END OF THEIR THREE JUNE 24TH meeting at the White House, US President George W Bush and his visitor from the Philippines, President Macapagal-Arroyo, faced the press for a photo opportunity. President Arroyo arrived in the United States around the same time a powerful typhoon was battering her country's islands. A passenger ship carrying almost 800 people was reported to have capsized in stormy waters.

The American President's opening remarks at the press briefing were expected to several US broadcasters and those same scathing remarks of those from Manila. They give us a glimpse of the state of mind of the world's most powerful leader whom Nelson Mandela once called a "thoughtless man." Here is a fragment of the transcript:

President Bush: "Madam President, it is a pleasure to welcome you back to the Oval Office. We have just had a very constructive dialogue. First, I want to tell you how proud I am to be the President of a nation that—in which there's a lot of Philippine-Americans. They have America and they love their heritage, but I remind them that they're Americans. I'm reminded of the great spirit of the—of our Philippine-American when I ran dinner at the White House." [laughter]

President Arroyo: "Yes."

President Bush: "And the chef is a great person and a really good cook, by the way. Madam President."

The Lit Times summed up the rest of the briefing thus: "Arroyo thanked Bush for the compliment, and for the offer to send vets as aids. The Philippines need desperately new U.S. Navy ships to help with its island nation, and vets to lead a country suffering crisis shortage. 'We're happy to do it,' said Bush. 'We want to help our friends in a time of need.'"

The Filipino-American feel that Bush was referring to is, of course, none other than Gideon "Gid" Cunanan, Mary Filipina granted her appointment at White House head chef to. We just 2005 as a major national achievement. Bush must have been reminded of the Cunanan-done pride Filipinos take in the success of this compatriot in the American Presidential election. He might have been so captivated by this charming thought that he momentarily forgot he was talking to the President of a nation that had just been visited by a tragic calamity. Reading the transcript from the Oval Office, one can't help asking if this was the morning that 4th Asian country over the world for which the man cited all the way to America with half of his CabInet at a time of gloom and mourning in the country he left behind.

All over the world, the nations that Filipino overseas workers have served well by their labors, talent and dedication never fail to express their appreciation for the cheerful way Filipinos perform their duties while reminding with the vicissitudes of living in strange cultures. While they miss the immense contribution Filipino workers make to their countries, however, even the most appreciative among them tend to be oblivious to the personal suffering that migrant workers often bear so as to gain of their isolation from their families and communities.

Once in a while, one comes across a reflective piece that underlines the gratitude of host communities for the sacrifices made by families of Filipinos guest workers. Such is the short essay written by Abdullah in Maghlouth for a local newspaper in Saudi Arabia. The author remarks: "Wherever I see Filipinos working in this Kingdom, I wonder what our life would be without them. Saudi Arabia has the largest number of Filipino workers—1,819,577—outside the Philippines. In 2006 alone, the Kingdom received more than 111,000 workers from the Philippines and their numbers are still mounting .... Nobody here can think of a life without Filipinos .... We could do a slow death if they chose to leave us."

There are heartwarming sentiments, and they could form the basis of a global solidarity with migrant workers everywhere. But they are necessarily self-referential: they note the indispensable contributions that Filipinos make to the well-being of the host nation. They do not speak to the suffering of their exile, their rendezvous and their loyalty. But they do not see the human being that performs all these services and possesses all these traits. They do not see the families these workers have left behind, the relationships they have put on hold because of migration, and the experiences of humiliation and helplessness they often go through as virtual exiles in strange lands, away from their loved ones and circle of intimates, their lives tend to be lean. Wrenched from the cultures that is their medium, their identities tend to atrophy.

They help maintain and reproduce the social systems that host them, but these systems do little to integrate them as members. Their service is needed, but not their person, or—to be more precise—not the cultural practices that they embody, those individuals with dreams of their own.

A world without Filipinos may seem unimaginable to those nations whose lives have been greatly enriched by their presence. But, impossible as it may be, a world that offered every Filipino the right to find employment wherever he may choose to work would be a far richer world. Better still, a Philippine society that affords every Filipino the chance to grow and to use his talents without having to leave his country would be a far richer society.

+++

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Shortsighted

EVEN AS THE NATION IS DEVELOPING MEMBRIUM DUBBE, top administrators are fostering oil, President Bush has proposed resolving a near-excuse of the most important, long-standing environmental problems on energy.

He wants Congress to lift a moratorium on offshore drilling.

That's a shortsighted approach to the nation's energy policy. It looks to the out-wrong approach environmentally. The nation is being

FOREIGN COMMENT

squeezed by fuel prices, but that is no cause to forsake its own sound environmental protections. It is no more as if it is to a long-term problem. ...

The nation needs to hear about a sound, long-term energy policy that will continue to wean the nation off oil and toward alternative fuel sources.

The president has also called for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which would be an environmental mistake as great today as before. — The Tennessean (Nashville, Tennessee)

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Questions raised on Ilocos Sur's adopted son

NEAL CRUZ'S COLUMN YESTERDAY ("HOW about workers abused by their employers?") was fortuitous, because I had just received by mailed mail—how quaint—material from one Hydie Cobar-Hosaka, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte, among other things, mom of the issues Cruz was talking about.

What Que sent me was a copy of a letter he wrote to the provincial board of Ilocos for presenting to its executive terms that Rudy's resolution adopting Lance Tiu as a son of the province last May 28. In a subsequent e-mail to me, Que said that adoption was "a betrayal of the tobacco farmers and oppressed and abused of workers in Tiu's interests in our province."

Que had entered my radar screen about three years ago, when he sent me materials against Lance Tiu, but I disregarded them at the time because he had just been dismissed from a Tiu company (as Asia Brewery's regional sales manager of Northern Luzon), and although his materials were pretty damaging, I wasn't sure that he hadn't been dismissed for reasons, and that he was just getting back at Tiu any way he knew how.

It turns out, from the materials he sent, that he was his case of illegal dismissal against the Tiu company last year—at least at the arbiter's level with the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC). It is now under review by Commissioner Raul Aquino of the NLRC, and will be appealable all the way to the Supreme Court, as Cruz pointed out. And many people are aware of Tiu's very impressive string of legal and other victories in every level of the judiciary system. One remembers his successful case against the pilots and general crew of the Philippine airlines, not to mention the stories about how Supreme Court Justice Teodoro Padilla was shocked and angered when what he thought was a majority decision he had written against Tiu became the dissenting opinion at the last minute.

It turns out also that Que served, for a short period of time during Cory Aquino's administration, as regional director of the Department of Trade and Industry in Ilocos Norte, and that he was fired from that position by Governor Imee Marcos, who was then the governor of Ilocos Norte.

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

Que is now apparently working for Tiu's tobacco, as an appointed member of the Ilocos Sur provincial board. I am reprinting excerpts from his letter and leave it to the reader to judge its merits:

"I am registering my vehement objection to the resolution approved by this honorable body last May 28, 2008, adopting Mr. Lucio Tan, taxpayer and businessman, as a son of Ilocos Sur. Mr. Tan is not a native of Ilocos Sur, but is known to be a businessman of ill repute, for worse than Hitler[ill] who was deposited in the 1950s because of economic crimes .... May I call your attention to the following events ...

On tobacco farmer exploitation: "We all know that the tobacco farmers in the province of Ilocos Sur, and elsewhere in the North, are victims of the greed of the person whom you want to adopt as a son of our beloved province .... Last November, a very influential government official of our province personally related to us in a group that you, as Provincial Board, were instrumental in the rejection of the wage increase in the tobacco industry, and found out that in Tarlac province, China, said to be a sister province of our province, the per kilogram price of Virginia tobacco leaves equal to our product here was as high as five equivalent of P300, while he was buying it only at a high of P40 here. No amount of injustice appeasement had rounded the exploitative price because he used his monopolistic grip over the poor farmers in our province. He had no qualms ... robbing them of their hard-breaking agricultural labor. ..."

On labor exploitation: "...employees in his infamous Northern Tobacco Redrying Company Incorporated (NTRCI) and Asia Brewery Incorporated (ABI), just two of many others, have been victimized by his anti-labor practices. Many have chosen to accept whatever little they have because of fear since if they were to assert justice and enforce the power of his wealth, would blow their complaints to nowhere, leaving them in prolonged pain or, as what happened to ABI branch manager Ronnie Robles, to die in humiliation, heartbreak and regret. As an individual complainant, only a few of his thousand unjustly separated workmen stood up against his and his wife's power.

"My case is a typical example ....

"... 322 of the hand-of-labor complainants, all our previous stores, of NTRCI have recently won their cases at the NLRC against their oppressive employer. Nevertheless, as an unsound every case to take out the small. Secretary for justice and restitution due them they are still hanging in the air .... Because Tan has the money he will keep filing an appeal up to the Supreme Court knowing that the poor victims and their families will go hungry and more, if not all, will accept his offer of measly consolation. The struggle is clear: pitting the labor dispute until the poor will either lose their heritage him in defeat or simply not be able to do anything until the case is decided in his favor.

"And recently also, six illegally dismissed drivers of ANI's dummy company, Northern Trading Corporation, Luong Solar Office .... were his case at the NLRC San Fernando City, La Union. And again, just like the other anti-labor cases filed by Tan's workers in his other numerous interests like SMI, UE etc., that were at the SC/CA level, the same strategy is used—the monetary[appearance appealing the last case step by step because he has the money to operate while the victim only has few coins and money to use.

"Not only is his ill-repute billionaire extending the people—the workers and farmers...but even the government [as] The City of Vigan is being grossly shortchanged of taxes due here."

(To be continued tomorrow)

Surveys on access to court justice

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

SEVERAL LAST MONDAY'S "FORUM ON DECREASING access to justice: Bridging gaps and ensuring workloads," held by the Supreme Court (media summary), or video conference, in Manila, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro, this is a good time to review social surveys on access to justice in the country.

Equal treatment of rich and poor? Public opinion on the statement "Whether rich or poor, people should have access to court generally receive equal treatment" is one of the select items in the archives of Social Weather Stations. It was first used in a July 1983 national poll done for the Philippine Bar Association (PBA), and has been repeated six times since then.

In July 1983, 49 percent of adults nationwide agreed with the statement above, 26 percent disagreed with it, and the rest were undecided. To date, that has proved to be the best showing. It was the only time when more people felt than disagreed with the statement above.

The ugly post-Marcos no-equal-treatment answers dropped to 43 in December 1985, 41 in April 1987, and 36 in December 1988; it rose slightly to 40 in June 2000, and then slid down again to 26 in December 2009. Nationally speaking, all of the 1983-2007 readings were split over whether or not the surveys show a decline in equality of access to court justice over the period 1983-2009.

Equal prosecution of rich and poor? The 1983 PBA survey also tested the variant, "Whether rich or poor, people should receive equal prosecution by the government." In hindsight, this variant begged the question of how to definitely identify persons as criminals prior to their prosecution and conviction, being "who are accused of crimes" would have been better. But imprecision in wording is the least worry people have in answering polls; in this case, the answers should be interpreted as referring to prosecution of those who deserve it.

In any case, in July 1983, 61 percent agreed and only 11 percent disagreed with the statement above. The ugly post-Marcos readings were 49 percent in December 1985 and 50 in April 1987, and only now slightly so 51 in January 1999, the last time the item was used in a poll.

E. "It is hard for me to understand when the judge and other lawyers say inscrutable things are my language."—46.

Thus the poll confirms that the government in general, and the judiciary and legal profession in particular, should work to solve as much as they can. Problems 1 and 2, which relate to general attention deficit/distraction, definitely harm the poor more than the rich, since can be alleviated through reduction of the real forms.

The statute of limitary is next, by the public as pervasive in the courts as in other agencies of the government. In the 2000 PBS, the 31 percent who felt it would be harder to bribe officials of the courts than officials of other agencies were roughly equal to the 28 persons who felt it would be easier to bribe them. A majority of 37 persons felt it would be neither harder nor easier. Dealing with corruption is a standard feature of good governance.

The problem of finding trustworthy lawyers for the poor has begun to be addressed by grassroots law groups. These are all concerned with human rights in general, and some are human-specifically on legal problems of peasants, migrants, child and women workers, indigenous people, etc. Indeed, human rights groups are overwhelmed.

The enhancement of court decisions, the expansion of court judges to render meaningful justice, and the use of languages and terminologies that ordinary people can understand are all the direct responsibility of the judiciary itself. Some courts, the best ones in the Supreme Court's.

Language bias. Law Monday Chief Justice Reynato Puno called the result of the pilot use of Tagalog in Bulacan court proceedings "very positive." The associate Chief Justice Jose Catral Mendoza among his criticisms—a 2005-04 Bill conveys of all judges of regional trial courts and 'selves, in which 899 responded, found 76 percent objecting to the use of the local language in court proceedings. In a portrayal of a document unfamiliar to such a single judge.

Contact SWS: www.sws.org.ph or mahar@sws.gobeadnet.org.ph.

Roskilde

ITS FINDS IN TWO COUNTRIES AS HE IT OFTEN HAND made me imagine the Philippines as curiously sunny. Now that I am home, I realize how silly that notion was. As the monsoon showers fall on Manila, the sound of the rain makes me long for my late days in Denmark, where I found rain that, at 20, I will had a lot of grousing up to do.

Perhaps we were spoiled at the student residence in London, where our rooms were cleaned every morning and we had scrumptious dinners served with our meals. Arriving in Roskilde, Denmark, for a residency at an exchange student, I was stunned to find that the rooms for which we were charged a 9500,000 deposit was empty. I survived my first week through the kindness of strangers: a student who loaned me an extra mattress and a sleeping bag, a secretary at the university who sneaked me plates and utensils from the cafeteria for me, and others who still never know how grateful I was that they didn't call the police because at the dumping-dead where I found a bed and two chairs.

Raised in a two-income household in the Philippines, I settled on the house help for many domestic chores. Forced to do the same chores in a foreign land, I took the challenge rather seriously. Simple tasks like cleaning the house and the toilet gave me a sense of responsibility. I cooked for myself but ignored my new friends the contents of eating my culinary-ing kitchen experiments. And though I ended up smoking my chicken in the bathroom sink, I enjoyed doing the laundry in-vivian in the tiny sink and hanging it out to dry.

At the Danish students were inclusive and other Asians were more so. I found myself in the company of European students who never also stopped in their quiet hauler welcome commercial establishments, but wandered the winter by singing on the karaoke and dancing, and crashed the 19-hour-long parties that lasted until the next early-daily differ-ent from London and Manila. Until the harvest came.

Every year, the population of peaceful Roskilde doubles for the music festival, where 80,000 paying guests would cash and drink all over the world. For young Danes, camping out with friends and drinking are the beginning of age. It's a weekend of sex, drugs and rock and roll.

But for me, I was one of the 20,000 volunteers, and I only caught the tail of a French girl I barely knew. I stained the carpet with beer, and my rubber boots got sun in different spots and my worn trash bags could earn me best clothing about in the larger master. I never so doesn't like Sunday with a funky backpack and a clear conscience, feeling ill at ease with the bottom-line that I have achieved.

Hey mister! The Red Hot Chili Peppers played after the trains stopped running and I had no choice but to go directly from gang to the early brunch scene.

For three eight-hour shifts, I donned a bright orange vest and walked around and around the campsite area to distribute the trash bags. I also served drinks at booths for non-students free, watching out for intruders slipping through the wire fence. The lowest point was replenishing toilet paper inside portable toilets cleaned in an area approximately knee-deep of clear excrement. Judging from the brand name of people pooping for hours on end, it was clear that the non-Danish population was in deep water.

My one-day worst cutback in the freshest 27 years known, "drinking in the mud was a never ending exercise. My booster plastic poncho was not enough to withstand the constant slogging in the mud. Even my shoes, which I had treated with Spirk and the colorful zone for the covered wages. The weather was kinder to the other headliners, including metal veterans The Who and the Beastie Boys, and younger artists like MGMT and Muse.

Since the Mud Festival's inception in 2000, where rain people were reported to drink, safety has been a priority at the festival. "Take care of each other," the large screens trained. of banned goers in between acts. And they did. A drunk (drugged?) stranger stopped me in the middle of my trash collection duties to ask me to watch his bag. I obliged. He came back beautiful. I will never forget how his friends came after him and cheered us both on for her acts. Although police were here and security depended on volunteers, only one violent incident was reported. However, there were several reported injuries from rubber boots, and many cuts more from broken glass and beer bottles.

Soon after the music died, I revisited the campsite, the sleeping bag, the plastic and utensils, the bed and the chairs where I got them. I packed all my belongings and went back to camping, a city also famous for its unproductive searches for the cure.

I don't know if it ever was a success, cash bags and rubber boots or a concert again. But living in the middle of nowhere and surviving the frantic shower me the dignity of manual labor and the generosity of strangers, and taught me that human dignity is not measured by material wealth. It gave me a reason to party and thus independent is not alone doing exercising by yourself but learning how to make your guests with others comfortable.

At the city returns to luxury drops on our tropical islands, where class distinctions are much back in mind. I assure help but smile.

Abby Yeo, 20, looks forward to graduating with a master's in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies from the Institute of Education, University of London.

Teaching for success at King Faisal School

COMMENTARY

Nono Sta. Romana Cruz

MORE FRIENDS FOUND OUT THAT I WAS going to do teacher training in Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, they looked askance and said, "But you have not even finished doing the work that you have."

It is not well known that Riyadh has at least 13 international schools dedicated to a constantly growing large-number population of Filipinos, dependents of professionals who work there. The schools use kindergarten to high school parallel curricula from the Philippines, Britain and the US and are under the jurisdiction of the Philippines' Department of Education, which is not for the least in Arabian standard that Arabs should send the schools, they would seem like Philippine schools with Arabic subjects.

The Future Generation Philippine International School, probably the newest kid on the block which started in second school year in June 2008, is owned by Madam Hannah Bint Saleh Al Subhan, a Muslim princess now married to a Filipino lawyer. Madam Hannah's magnificent-looking school has become the iconic "bubble" of the school on the road to the kingdom.

Upon the invitation of the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh, which is headed by Ambassador Antonio Villa, I was invited to be the resource person for a three of us from the SEAMEO (seaming business people—Raquel David Ching, Enrique F. Escalda, and myself—can but June 25-27 a workshop on "Teaching Strategies" at the King Faisal School in the Diplomatic Quarter of Riyadh.

This was part of the Philippine Embassy's month-long celebration of the 112th Philippine Independence Day in Riyadh. The first activity of its kind, this was the brainchild of the ambassador's wife, Rina B. Villaruz, a colleague of ours at the Philippine Normal School. Her background as a Columbia University graduate in English, speech and drama, a teacher and a trainer at the foreign service institute of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Rina was assigned to the needs of the Filipino teachers in Riyadh. She felt the teachers would benefit from a professional development program. Rina's idea to have me conduct her in establishing the first Philippine international school in Arabia when Foley was seized there in the '90s. It was she said to enhance the cultural efforts Rina's idea, who made this colloquium as a successful part of the celebration.

Five hundred nine teachers from 11 schools representing a cross section of grade and year levels attended the all-expenses paid workshop, courtesy of DFAIT, the sponsor.

It was apparent that the teachers needed a palpable update on the possibilities, obviously a benefit of the opposite to worthy target than what the Philippine wearing had selected them. Despite the wearing attitude of having to pay back their spots, as placement fees, the gleaming homesickness, and the unfamiliar food, the teachers' fatigue, the teachers felt fortunate to be doing what they knew best—active for properly compensated fields.

Mindful of their learnings, the teachers were connected with the cause of Philippine education—especially the poor. Many of the public school teachers in comparison (all) is not easy especially for women in the school kingdom, where one cannot venture unescorted even with the mandatory abaya (a large, black cloak, worn over their home and flowing or wrapped around the head) and veil. Still, they join in Riyadh after dawn to save and send money home. Admittedly, their salaries are not that high, but will someone really more than what they could ever dream of back home. And who is in argue with that?

Zenaida Monsalve of the International Philippine School in Riyadh: SPSH, the first such school to be started in Riyadh 20 years ago, says that "the government pays the best salary to the teachers, so teacher will be working abroad."

But students are teachers everywhere, whether in Riyadh or in Manila or in Metro Manila. They mostly about the large class size in Philippine classrooms and have requested some clear difference in the classroom climate. Here, they have 20 to 25 students with their own textbooks and even individual locally white-boards.

Florentina J. Pefianco, also of PNSE reminds her colleagues: "Every child can learn." Indeed, in Riyadh, this is not an homeland, but not to stop here however. Her should not forget we are Filipinos. When we come back, let's help our country."

At workshop's end, most of the teachers were enthusiastic and asking Ambassador Tony and Rina Villaruz for a recurring performance. Ambassador engagement series, the three facilitators gained as much as well. It was a rare opportunity to meet and talk with such a large number of Filipino teachers in a foreign country with the advantage of time and distance. Many of the teachers had useful thoughts on how to make Philippine education more globally competitive.

If the Filipino teachers feel blessed, so should the students in their care. And while I am happy for the teachers, I am more so for those who will have "lives" them in foreign shores.

One wonders. What really is the teaching post, Saudi Arabia or the Philippines?

Nono Sta. Romana Cruz is a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People, a trustee of the Ilo Ilohan Foundation and a member of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power. E-mail comments to nonocruz@gmail.com

Murder-suicides in paradise

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

BORACAY—THE LATEST MURDER-SUICIDE in Boracay, involving a Filipino woman, is giving this supposed island paradise a bloody eye. The Filipino community is currently shocked and saddened by the killing of Sonia Bautista Jones, 39, and her husband Michael Jr., 7. Detective, a Filipino immigrant, taught English as a second language at Barangay High School where students and residents described him as "kind and gentle."

Police evidence indicates Colombo was killed over the weekend and her son a few days later. The alleged killer, Michael Sr., who had left a suicide note in the police report. Investigators were vigilant, saying the domestic scene is a happy family with no history of domestic violence.

There of these six violent domestic killings, including this latest one, has been reported online, with the female victims all Filipinos. Since there is no Philippine National Police (PNP) office on Boracay, the police blotter was likely not filled. The reasons "There are the highest numbers we've experienced in at least a decade," notes Carol Lee, executive director of the Kanlaon Crisis Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

The latest Boracay murder-suicide happened on April 23, when Rommel "Romel" Dakila, 39, shot and killed his wife Delia, 38, in their home in Sitio, leaving behind four teenage children. Again, neighbors could not understand the killings as the couple showed no signs of domestic disharmony.

A month later, on May 26, another Filipino murder-suicide struck. Elmer Dumbo, 56, a hospital worker, shot and killed his wife Marissa, 45, and then himself in their apartment. Locally

of domestic abuse, at least 60 percent are Filipino women and girls, both immigrants and local born. Explanations have ranged from "cultural issues" like "Filipino males being possessive and prone to jealous rage" to "financial reasons," such as the high cost of living and meeting necessary social needs. But these are all largely speculative, which may be incidental or irrelevant to the actual circumstances of the couple murder-suicides.

One concept that may partially explain group murder-suicides is economic dependency and the probability of violence also increases. The upside this to a financial explanation. Never due to be the case. California, for instance, which has more than one million Filipinos, ranked as having a falling every where income. It is the only state in the continental U.S. through the highest in the United States in proportion of state population) having a falling every month, it just literally.

Obviously there are no definitive causes, and more social commentary inadequately have to pay more attention to protect women in abusive or broken relationships. "We're not just doing a good enough job," Lee concludes, noting that in the whole year of 2009, there were six murders related to domestic violence. This year, there's already double that and there's not already six months old.

Part of the problem in American society particularly is that, it's so hard to intervene in domestic affairs without risking raising individual or private rights. You cannot force your own life living in private affairs. Even if you know that a neighbor's spouse cases in Hawaii where a man was killed every so-and-so time another man from leaving his wife.

This trend is not only alarming or disturbing. We never know when or by such odds of business our next victim. It's simply scary to say the least.

Belinda A. Aquino is professor and director of the Center for Philippine Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

YOUNG BLOOD

Abby Yeo

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

THEY SAID

Disaster 'NDCC'

"The NDCC [National Disaster Coordinating Council] is a disaster in itself. In one day we have set up to solve a single point of this or a single drop of water from the NDCC."

—Iloilo Rep. Jerry Treñas, hosting over the collaboration and bad characterization of the NDCC in the devastation wrought by Typhoon "Frank"

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

LETTERS

Teleconference histrionics all for show

WHEN THERE IS A TRAGEDY IN HIS/HER family, a person drops everything and rushes back home to find out why and how it happened, to mourn the loss, to share in the grief, to console and unite with the family.

Jim Glenn Blumpied Arroyo and her co-hosts didn't want to know any of it and proceeded, ad nauseam, to grandstand and pontificate on the issue of the Philippines' justice system.

INQUIRER Visaya

E-mail:inq_cebu@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirerdirect.com

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Aklan still in shambles after 'Frank'

By Hector P. Bargacio
Editor, Aklan

THE SIGHT OF Rill Florencio Miraflor, Aklan's highest official, being fanned by aides and staff while being treated for a mild stroke at the generator-powered emergency clinic of the provincial hospital in Kalibo summed up the situation of the province after the onslaught of Typhoon "Frank."

Stressed out by days of supervising relief work, Miraflor, who also served as governor of the province, was rushed to the hospital after complaining of chest pains and difficulty in breathing last Sunday. He was satisfied at midnight as a chartered plane to Manila and was flanked at the Philippine Health Center.

But for the rest of the Aklanon folk, the healing and getting back to their feet would take much longer.

While eyes are mostly focused on the clouds and destruction being wrought by typhoon in Iloilo and the sinking of MV Princess of the Stars near Sibuyan Island in Romblon, Kalibo, the provincial center of business, education and government remains covered in mud with no electricity, water and phone lines two weeks after "Frank" struck on June 21.

Most residents have not gone back to their livelihood and are lining up along the Pinoytan Park, the town's public plaza, begging for food and water and waiting to mob the next vehicular convoy along carrying relief goods.

"I haven't sold anything since [June 21] and even if we can find rice at P18.25 a kilo, I don't have money to buy it," said Ariel Pesquiz, 33, a rice cake vendor and one of those among some 200 plaza residing for relief goods to arrive.

Pesquiz said rice is being sold at no overprice of P 150 per cavan (P60 per kilo) despite pronouncements of authorities that they are monitoring the prices of prime commodities.

Abnormal times

Life in this town of 71,000 residents has not returned to normal.

While the water supply has been partially restored by the Metro Kalibo Water District, the water running out from faucets is murky, forcing residents to either buy bottled water.

Most residents are still in their homes, trying to remove the mud from each piece of furniture, kitchenware and other household items that survived the mudflow.

Classes at all levels remained suspended as most schools were destroyed or damaged and students could hardly walk through the slippery mud, debris, fallen trees and toppled electric posts.

The operations of the provincial and municipal government are hobbled as disaster relief operations, cleaning up of the mudded streets and rescue and the restoration of basic services. All other functions remained suspended because the provincial capitol was among the hardest hit by the mudflow.

The flood destroyed or damaged the records of offices dividing the accounting and assessor departments. Mudded and still wet computers, chairs and tables have been piled along with drenched file folders on hallways and in front of offices.

Offices and court buildings have also been hobbled as the mudflow as the two-story Cuddeback F. Barros Hall of Justice after strong winds, heavy rains and mud flow drenched court documents and equipment and blew off the roof and ceiling of court rooms.

Economic activities have almost grounded to a halt.

Most stores including fast food chains were closed as employees continued the clean up and repair of inventories and equipment, washing mud and debris with filtered water.

Residents are fearful of cash as automated teller machines (ATMs) of the town's 14 banks remained nonfunctional because of damaged computers and buildings. Bank customers line up for hours to withdraw cash over the counter from a few banks that have reopened.

Long lines of people can also be seen in pawnshops and money remitter offices. But the lines are longer in rice and food distribution centers, with residents coming in droves, several hours before mid-noon lines.

"Many do not have a house to return to and cannot work because they have lost everything even the businesses and stores of carpenters and food business of vendors," said George Cobar, spokesperson of the provincial chapter of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

The flow of information to the public is almost non-existent because all radio stations have not resumed broadcast. Residents have to rely on reports aired by radio stations in Roxas City in Capiz.

"Everything is at a standstill ... We are in disbelief," former Aklan Rep. Allen Quimpo said.

The storm destroyed almost P2 billion worth of property, infrastructure and agriculture with more than half of the province's population of 473,771 affected, said Gov. Carlito Marquez.

At least 20 Malaysian died and 500 others were injured. Seven others remained missing.

"We never heard ourselves for a calamity like this," said former congressman Quimpo who served from 1992 to 2001.

Tales

Glenn Arenas, corporate communications manager of the Ayala Corporation's Caticlan Resorts, said he and his friends rushed to the upper story of their house when water suddenly rose. "The rushing sound of the floodwater was so scary and it shook the walls of our house."

He cannot forget the sight of the dead being carried in sacks at the public plaza and carried by relatives to funeral parlors because funeral cars and other equipment were destroyed or damaged by the massive mudflow.

Severin Tegres, spokesperson of the militant urban poor group Kadamay, said that was among about 1,000 evacuees who flocked to the plaza and later sought shelter at the Church-owned Aklan College.

She took care of an old vendor on June 23 but the latter was found dead the next day after staying at the grandstand and roof without food and water.

Some residents have complained of the failure of government agencies to quickly respond to the calamity and to provide assistance as thousands confronted the task of food, potable water and shelter.

"It's very slow and by the time we get help, some were already dead," said Roberto Villanueva, 47, and a father of three.

Villanueva said they only ate bread and drank rainwater for three days after the mudflow.

Kalibo Mayor Jeremar Rebaldo has drawn criticism from some residents for the slow response.

But Rebaldo, who was often seen in fatigue pants and sporting a hunting knife, brushed aside the criticisms.

"I'm only one man. I can't be here in all places at the same time," he told the listeners.

He said he assigned or delegated to councilors and other officials the distribution of goods and other relief materials.

Aside from supervising the relief operations, he said he also facilitated the bringing in of 26 heavy equipment from the Metro Manila Development Authority to help in the clearing of streets.

The residents also decried the lack of price control after the calamity, with prices rising at least once.hold.

A small bottle of distilled water was sold at P80 while rice was sold at P120 per gantang (9kg) per kilo), which made it more unaffordable for victims who have already lost all their properties.

A naively talked about case is the stabbing to death of a rice vendor who refused to sell a gantang of rice to a man who was taking care of a sick child. The man who had only P500 allegedly stabbed dead the vendor who insisted on selling it at P120 despite the man's plead-ings. But police have no records of the alleged incident.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has visited the province twice, first at the Kalibo airport and in Barangay Mabo to distribute relief and food packs.

But residents said the aid has not been enough and that the President should go directly to the affected areas and hand out the food and other relief materials.

"She should go to our houses and barangay and see and smell the mud. Here can she understand our plight if she just stays at the airport or at Barangay Mabo?" said Lilia Matias.

A week after the storm, Aklanon folk are slowly scraping the mud from their homes and cleaning the streets.

But they know that getting back on their feet would be difficult and would take a long time.

"We are back not to square one but to zero," said Rebaldo. "We have to start all over again."

Major concern

A major concern is ensuring the food supply of the province as the flooding destroyed 106 hectares of vegetable plantations on Mabo Island and on other barangays along the Aklan River.

Councilor Emmanuel Sachi Reanto de la Cruz, chair of committee on agriculture of the Kalibo municipal council, revealed that they need at least PESOS,000 worth of seeds and fertilizers for the vegetable plantations alone.

"It would take at least two months for the production [crops proper] to recover a semblance of normalcy," said Quimpo.

He said the majority severed as no peak people to make important decisions including where and how to build their homes and where to put up businesses and equipment.

Governor Marquez said they will soon start the rehabilitation and anticipate that this would need a lot of funds. Damage in the provincial capitol alone reached P160 million.

Mayor Jose Delfino, vice governor of the Kalibo Diocese, noted that the tragedy struck two days before the feast of St. John the Baptist, the town's patron saint.

The customary procession between did not push through as Kalibo was a ghost town during that day. No people came to the church, many of them in mass.

"The tragedy is also a reminder that with all our intelligence and high technology we are to God's hands," said Delfino.

But he said life must go on and called on the people not to allow disasters to weaken them.

"This is a challenge to our faith and a chance for us to grow spiritually. It also is time to reflect on the meaning of life that could be taken from us any day and any time," he said.

Delfino said the death and destruction should serve as a "reminder to those in position to be more conscious and faithful about their responsibilities as public officials."

PAINT Access to Kalibo remain impassable more than a week after Typhoon "Frank" triggered a massive mud flow. LEONEL M. ABASOLA

'Everything is at a standstill ... We are in disbelief'

TARLAC II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
San Nicolas, Camiguisan, Tarlac

INVITATION TO BID

14,340 meters of WIRE, ACSR 6/1 + 4.0 MM, Code Name - PIGEON
NOTE: Eligible Bidders are accepted for Manufacturers only

Pre-qualification documents and Submission of Sealed Bids shall be received from June 27-28, 2008 at 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM by the Bids and Awards Committee through its Chairman, BONIFE B. MANALO-RIVERA or TARLAC II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. Compound, Brgy. San Nicolas, Camiguisan, Tarlac, Philippines

Accredited suppliers previously pre-qualified need not to update their documents.

A Bid Bond of at least 2.0% of Total Bid Price is required, either in form of Cash, Manager's or Cashier's Check.

TARLAC II reserves the right to reject any and all applications in one application and to bid without offering any reason, and waive any defect therein. TARLAC II reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Additional information may be furnished upon request. Send all communications to the Bids Committee at the address mentioned above or at Telephone No. (045) 923-0340 or Fax No. (045) 923-0011 & 800 0014

(Sgd.) BONIFE B. MANALO-RIVERA
Bids Chairman

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
BUREAU OF HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES
Rm. 1102, DOH Compound
Tel. No. 743-1626 / 743-1627 Fax No. 743-1626
URL: http://www.bhfs.doh.gov.ph

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given on the conduct of a public hearing on the Standards and Technical Requirements for the Licensure and Regulation of Ambulatory Surgical Clinics Providing Oral and Maxillo-Facial Surgery.

The Bureau of Health Facilities and Services will hold this public hearing on July 24, 2008, Thursday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Audio Visual Room, Ground Floor, Lung Center of the Philippines, Quezon City.

All interested parties who wish to attend the public hearing should inform Ms. Annabelle Carandang at 743-8301 local 2929 (trunk line) or 711-9572 (direct line) not later than July 21, 2008. Each agency, institution or organization should send ONE representative.

(Sgd.) ATTY. NICOLAS B. LUTERO III, CESO III
Director IV

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
Energy Regulatory Commission
In the Matter of the Application for Approval of the Power Supply Agreement (PSA) between the Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company, Inc. (CEPALCO) and the Agusan Del Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ANECO) and the Agusan Del Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ANECO) and the Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company, Inc. (CEPALCO)
ERC Case No. 2008-

Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company, Inc. (CEPALCO) and Agusan Del Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ANECO) have filed with the Commission a joint application for approval of the Power Supply Agreement (PSA) between CEPALCO and ANECO, docketed as ERC Case No. 2008-

The joint application alleges, among others, that CEPALCO and ANECO have executed a PSA whereby CEPALCO shall supply the power requirements of ANECO; that the PSA is in accordance with the Retail Rules; that the PSA is beneficial to the consumers

Across the NATION

Esperon says talks with MILF moving

DAVAO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo's chief peace adviser yesterday said an agreement was likely to be signed in September to iron out kinks on the issue of territory that was keeping peace talks with Moro guerrillas from moving forward.

Hermogenes Esperon, also **former Armed Forces chief, said** at a briefing at the Mindanao Economic Development Council office here that the government has already presented to **the MILF its revised proposal** on ancestral domain.

The original proposal was rejected by the rebel group because of the government's position that **the future of the Bangsamoro territory** hinged on results of a plebiscite.

The MILF eventually pulled out of the negotiating table while accusing the government of insincerity.

Ms Arroyo, during a visit here, said the revised proposal was the product of deliberation among concerned government officials.

She did not elaborate but Press Secretary Jesse Dureza, Esperon's predecessor, said the new draft agreement is an improved version of the old one.

Esperon said representatives from Kuala Lumpur, which is brokering the talks, have witnessed the submission of the new government proposal on June 23 **and the MILF has already submitted** its counter-proposal.

"It is possible we could sign something on September. It depends on how fast we are moving," **Esperon said.**

Esperon said issues on freedom, jurisdiction and control were concessions, and on the land-to-land and organizational structure of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity are the three contentious issues in talks covering ancestral domain.

But while he was optimistic about the signing of agreement on ancestral domain, Esperon said there is still uncertainty about how the MOA should operate.

"There are things we need to prepare next week and give some pronouncements if we can get the approval of the President," he said.

"The lower development signals that the peace talks will formally resume in the coming days," he said.

Esperon also downplayed recent skirmishes in some parts of Mindanao saying there were efforts being made to prevent these from getting out of control.

The MILF has announced it has already sanctioned its commanders, who were responsible for the series of violence this month.

But Sinsuat Kipal, MILF chief negotiator, did not say what the specific sanctions were and who received them.

But he said ordinary guerrillas were only reprimanded.

"The latter have been reprimanded for their acts," Kipal said.

He said the MILF leadership "imposed sanctions (in consequence) and let them pay the consequences of their acts."

Stating the past days, MILF **rebels waged attacks** in Sinsuigan, North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan provinces.

Several people were killed in the attacks. **Judy Quiroz, Jhaneline P. Asis, Edwin Fernandez** *with a report from Joeffrey Mallem, Inquirer Mindanao*

DAY DREAM
What's there to do for a fisherman in those times when reports of contamination from the carbon HIV Princess of the Stars are pushing fish sales down? A fisherman at the Sta. Ana Wharf in Davao City just takes it in stride as he rests in the fading light of day.

'Frank' sufferers take 6-km trek for half kg rice

CALBIGDAS, BILIRAN IS-land—Six kilometers for a half kilogram of rice.

Life has become an arduous trek for daily survival for a little known tribal community here, struck by Typhoon "Frank" as hard as people in places usually found in maps, but not as isolated.

Take the case of Amy Rebico, a member of the Mangyan-Bondoon indigenous group of people on this island, who **braved those rebel guards** never letting himself out by the front gate crossers from an official in her village.

Rebico went on the three-kilometer trek to where the goods were being distributed, but only to learn that she would have to make that trip daily.

The reason? The half kilogram of rice that officials were distributing to the needy was barely enough for a day's meal.

In Biriliran, as did several other members of her tribal community, needed to walk six kilometers—to the relief distribution center and back home where hungry mouths were waiting to be fed—daily until their farms were producing the food that they have been earning or prior to Frank.

Her worst fears are realized, matter walk was worth it. At the end of that trek, she would have the half kilogram of rice and two packs of noodles, a set of meal that has to share with the children.

Rebico, 36, came with five other women who also took the chance to sell some gold leaves, the only produce that was left to them after Frank struck on June 21.

"The typhoon took our fruit-bearing plants," said Angela Kiano, 70, one of the women of Mangyan-Bondoon.

Mohara Biano, 35, was able to sell four sheets of gold leaves. She earned P48 for them, using the money to buy two kilograms of governments subsidized rice at P20 per kg.

Prior to Frank, the community thrived on food that its farmers grow. After the typhoon, the only edible thing left was camotes, a root crop that couldn't sustain daily nutritious needs.

"We lost our animals, our chickens," said the women.

But where to get food wasn't the only problem.

Frank destroyed their houses, **exposing their children to cold.** Many of the children are now suffering from asthma, said the women.

In place of the roofs that have been blown over, the relief people placed coconut leaves.

Alice Frederen, vice governor of Biliran province, said the suffering of the Mangyan-Bondoon community was typical of the hardships that the region province was going through after Frank—it goes unnoticed.

"The entire province has been damaged," she said.

Aid organizations, particularly the Philippine National Red Cross, brought 5,000 packs of relief goods.

In the village of Sabini, people were told to start the task to relief distribution centers early because the roads were barely passable as a result of landslides. *Mindanao T. Verda, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

TESDA

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Establishment for the TESDA Contact Center
(TESDA VoIP Infrastructure – IP Enabled Contact Center)

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority intends to apply the sum of **Php5,000,000.00** being the total approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the establishment of TESDA Contact Center. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

Bidding will be conducted through public bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines as specified in Republic Act No. 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only bids from bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The contract for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents (**ITB**). The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his/her responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION, 3rd Floor, TESDA Administration Building, TESDA Complex, East Service Road, South Luzon Expressway, Taguig City, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by the interested bidders from the above address and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **Fifteen Thousand Pesos only (Php15,000.00)**. The method of payment will be in the form of CNSH. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his/her duly authorized representative.

TESDA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference to all interested parties on July 14, 2008, 2:00 p.m. at the CETI Conference Room, Ground Floor, Learning Center, TESDA Administration Building.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before July 28, 2008. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms and amount:

- Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to 1% of the ABC; or
- Bank Guarantee equivalent to 1 1/2% of the ABC; or
- Surety Bond equivalent to 2 1/2% of the ABC; or
- Foreign government guarantee equivalent to 100% of the ABC

Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be held on July 28, 2008, 2:00 p.m. at the CETI Conference Room, Ground Floor, Learning Center, TESDA Administration Building. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

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NEWSBRIEFS

MARIVA VIZCAYA

Cops rescue Indian kidnapped in Tarlac

POLICE on Thursday rescued an Indian businessman who was abducted by four men in Bamban, Tarlac, on July 1.

Supt. Dominico Landa, acting provincial police director, said policemen found Harjinder Singh, 34, handcuffed and tied to a tree near a resort in Barangay Mabasa in Bayambang town at 3 p.m. Thursday.

Police have no clue to the kidnapping when four of the suspects, Ernesto Martin and Daniel Cruz, figured in a road accident in Barangay Bantog at Urbiztondo town on Thursday using Singh's stolen Hyundai Getz.

Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO

PNP asks Pampanga banks: Install CCTVs

A POLICE official in Pampanga has asked the 58 banks in the province to install closed-circuit television systems in their premises to ward off robbers.

Pampanga police director Senior Supt. Rolando Siongco reiterated the advice after four men on Thursday took P1.7 million from two bank customers who withdrew the money from the Bank of the Philippine Islands in Barangay Dolores here.

Donald Dupas, Inquirer Central Luzon

BIÑAN, Laguna

Arraignment of suspects in RCBC massacre moved

THE ARRAIGNMENT of three suspects in the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Calauan robbery-slaying case was postponed Tuesday and reset on Aug. 14.

Nikko Calleros Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

BOHOL

Telecoms giant helps in relief operations

TELECOMMUNICATIONS firm Smart Communications Inc. helped distribute relief goods to residents of areas in Bo Visayas and Mindanao who were suffering from the effects of typhoon "Frank."

Smart employees distributed a total of 1,500 relief packs during visits to Jeni, La Paz and Masbate Isle in Bohol and in the towns of Mottum, Kiamba and Maasim in Sarangani.

The packs contained rice, coffee, canned goods and personal care items.

GMA aide insists China firm abandoned NorthRail

CLAIR FREDERICK—REUTERS

The Chinese firminess has assured that its state-owned firm remained committed to the $2.4-billion NorthRail project, presidential adviser Eduardo Ermita said on Thursday amid **fears that the Chinese** contractor had withdrawn from the project.

"It effectively abandoned the project since February," he told the Inquirer, referring to the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. (CNMEC).

"This can easily be verified by anyone on the ground. Now what we must do is determine the reasons for such abandonment and its implications for the contractual obligations of both parties going forward," **Ermita**said, newly appointed president of the North Luzon Railways Corp., said.

The NLRC, a subsidiary of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Development Authority, is the proponent of the 80-km mass transit system from Caloocan City to the Clark Freeport in Pampanga.

In the City of Malolos in Bulacan, the CNMEC headquarters have been obviously left vacant for months now.

No personnel, machinery or construction-related activities were seen as the Inquirer saw on Wednesday.

Ermita on Monday said that CNMEC first pulled out its technical staff and later its surveyors. By March, it had demobilized its equipment on site.

Disagreements with NLRC over engineering and construction standards prompted the CNMEC to discontinue the work, it was learned.

NLRC executives have been considering it to return to work until late June.

Hearing in the wareness of Chinese Embassy spokesperson Deng Xiaobo that CNMEC has not backed out, Buencamino said that [CNMEC]

Inflation rate hits 11.4 percent in June

Front page A1

Prices of food products included in the Filipino consumer basket rose by 17.4 percent. This means food products that had cost P100 in June last year, would now be worth P117.4.

Inflation will start to moderate by the fourth quarter and the second 2009, the regulator added.

Benjamin Diokno, economics professor at the University of the Philippines, said rice had been gravely affected by rising oil prices.

'Oil dependency'

"Oil dependency is a major cause for increase in prices," Diokno told the Inquirer. "In the case of rice, prices have increased significantly because 40 percent of inputs are oil-based, such as fertilizers and pesticides."

Diokno also said the increasing global demand for rice was also to blame. He said the populations of India and China—both net-rating countries—have been growing significantly. The two countries have a combined headcount of around 2.5 billion.

Because the Philippines is a rice importer, one of the biggest in the world, the country is realsensitive to price increases in the world rice market.

Below poverty line

Diokno warned that the increase in food prices could drive more people to privation, rubbing salt on the wounds of those who already are living below the poverty line.

He noted that food-consumed for 60 percent of a poor household's consumption.

Rice alone accounts for 30 percent of a poor family's consumption, he added.

In 2006, 32.9 percent of the population, or 27.6 million, fell below the poverty line, based on the latest report of the National Statistical Coordination Board. The poverty incidence in 2006 was worse than in 2003, when there were only 23.8 million poor Filipinos, roughly 30 percent of the population.

Double whammy

"Poor Filipinos are now faced with the double whammy of higher food prices and less opportunity for work," Diokno said.

He noted that the unemployment rate, or the proportion of jobless Filipinos to total labor force, stood at 8 percent in April from 7.4 percent in the same month last year.

He suggested that the government implement projects that would improve irrigation and infrastructure in rural areas. This way, the government would provide more jobs and help improve farm production.

Palace plans

Yesterday, Malacañang announced the nation it would continue to come up with measures to help people cope with rising oil and food prices.

Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Salazar said the current inflation surge only showed the importance of "government-sectoral cooperation to curb price hikes."

At present, the government plans to use P4 billion generated from the value-added tax levied on its hefty dominate electricity sales and petroleum to help the struggle to cope with rising prices, Salazar said.

In particular, jeepney drivers would be given assistance to convert their engines from diesel into those that can run by refined petroleum gas.

The government, through the Department of Agriculture, would also help farmers boost rice and food production through the P62-billion FIELD program.

"We must join hands in unity to prices," Salazar said in a statement.

BSP options

According to deputy governor Amando Tetangco Jr., the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is now studying options to help curb the rise in inflation.

Tetangco urged manufacturers to be "sensitive" to the economic public and warned that government "will use intense boosters and restraints who sell gory" on them.

The WSJ said inflation rose for other commodity groups were recorded as follows: food beverages and tobacco as a whole (FBT) 16.5 percent, up from 13.6 percent in May; clothing, 4.2 percent from 4 percent; housing and repairs, 4.3 percent from 4 percent; services, 9.8 percent from 7.8 percent; and miscellaneous items, 2.5 percent from 2.3 percent.

Inflation for other food groups was seen as follows: corn, 38.3 percent in June from 27.1 percent in May; cereal preparations, 16.6 percent from 15.3 percent; fish, 16.6 percent from 9.6 percent; fruits and vegetables, 12.5 percent from 10.1 percent; meat, 11.6 percent from 10.4 percent; and miscellaneous foods, 8.3 percent from 7.6 percent. Dairy products and eggs registered a slowdown, at 23.3 percent and 7.2 percent from 13.7 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively.

Policy rates

The BSP hinted it was prepared to take action, such as by raising again its key policy rates during the next meeting of its Monetary Board.

The BSP's overnight borrowing rate currently stands at 5.25 percent, and its overnight lending rate at 7.25 percent.

"Demand pressures will moderate in monetary policy is generally tightened," Tetangco said.

An increase in the BSP's interest rates helps curb inflation. With a higher borrowing rate, banks would get more in terms of yield when they deposit their money with the BSP. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, AFP/Reuters

What is inflation?

Front page A1

The reason for the weakening of consumers' purchasing power is inflation, or the sustained increase in the price of a "basket" of goods and services that make up the usual purchases of typical Filipino households.

Included in the basket of goods and services are food, housing and repairs (this category covers rental rates and construction materials), fuel, light and water, clothing, and services. Each economic group is assigned a weight that is used to compute the increase in prices.

Inflation measures how far overall prices are rising over a specific period, usually a year. The higher the inflation, the faster prices are rising. Low inflation does not mean prices are going down; it only means prices are rising slowly from their levels a year ago.

Food a bigger weight

In the computation of inflation, food is given a bigger weight because to economists, far more than half of the average household budget. The largest single item in this consumption group is rice.

As a general rule, high inflation tends to slow down economic growth. It may cause the peso to depreciate against the US dollar and make imports more expensive for local manufacturers.

Dollars remitted by overseas Filipino workers in their families in the Philippines would be exchanged for more pesos, but this would not mean that OFW families would be better off because they would still have to deal with higher prices of goods and services.

RP stocks post gains but peso hits 10-mo low

Front page A1

(PSEI) rose 29.37 points, or 1.35 percent, to 2,369.21.

Also, the all-shares market edged up 12.5 points, or 0.63 percent, to 1,986.48.

The peso meanwhile closed at 43.45 against the US dollar after closing a 10-month low of 43.70 in intra-day trading.

Strong real estate

Property stocks were the biggest index gainers, doing 4.6 percent, or 54 points, to 899.2.

Index turnover hit 91.8 billion, with 1.04 billion shares changing hands.

Brokers said property stocks, which typically react negatively to prospects of higher interest rates, were the biggest gainers after they passed this cheap prices.

"Property stocks were oversold. It's a bear rally," said Joseph Bitangcol, president at Eagle Equities Inc. "They were sold down heavily before. They're very cheap now."

Conglomerates and office developer Megaworld Corp., which was the third most active stock yesterday, rose 3.6 percent to P1.16. Recently, Megaworld reached a 52-week low of P1.06.

Alliance Global Group Inc., the holding firm of tycoon Andrew Tan, which owns 42 percent of Megaworld, also grew 6 centavos or 1.6 percent to P3.58.

Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) jumped 4.8 percent, or 40 centavos, to P8.66, after hitting a 52-week low of P7.90 recently.

SM Prime Holdings Inc. also rose 40 centavos to P7, a gain of 6 percent, after hitting a 52-week low of P6.38 a share recently.

Hardly surprised

"Double digit inflation was already expected," said Antonio del Castillo of First Grade Holdings. "The market was hardly surprised. The current steady prices of some stocks encouraged buying activity today. Experts this as short-lived. The bears continue to lord on bad news specially second high oil prices."

Fund Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer of SSI Investment Management Phils., said the stock market also cheered the overnight bounce in the US market. Wall Street gained 75 points, or 0.65 percent, on hints traders ahead of the industrial sector data holidays.

At the Philippine Dealing System, the peso hit a 10-month low of 43.70 in intra-day trading.

Due to the central bank's aggressive interventions, the currency was pulled back up to close at 43.45 against the greenback.

Peso said down

Currency dealers said the market sold down the peso on concerns that the country's inflation targeted to a 14-year high of 11.4 percent, that as the thought forward eg. Filipinos reminded US dollars between 45.00 to 45.70, the market saw a good opportunity to "cut to gains, thereby allowing the local currency to close slightly stronger than Thursday's 45.50 to the dollar.

The peso, now Asia's second worst performing currency next to the South Korean won, would have fallen deeper had it not been for the BSP's interventions.

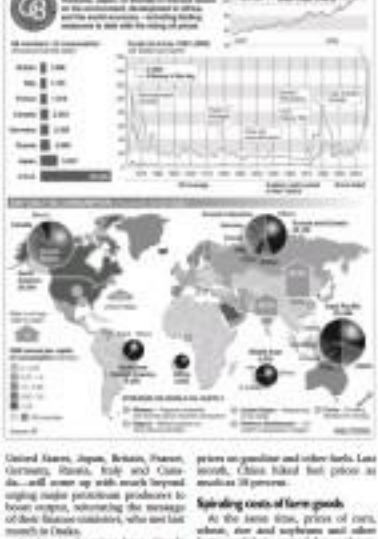
Some traders estimated that the central bank accounted for as much as half of yesterday's volume of $447.4 million at the Philippine Dealing System.

But despite the slight bounce yesterday which allowed the peso to close near the day's high of 43.45, the local currency tumbled by nearly P1 or 2.2 percent this week from last week's close of 44.46 to the US dollar.

Since the start of the year, the peso has depreciated by about 8.2 percent, wiping out nearly half of the gains against the greenback recorded last year.

G8 meeting in Japan amid global slump

Front page A1



Spiraling costs of farm goods

At the same time, prices of corn, wheat, rice and soybeans and other farm goods have surged due to changing diets, urbanization, expanding populations, extreme weather, growth in biofuel production and speculation.

Spiraling fuel and food costs could drive millions into poverty, the Asian Development Bank has warned. In India, inflation has jumped to a 13-year high of 11.4 percent.

On the food front, the G-8 leaders may announce an aid package or pledging agricultural investment to poorer countries, experts say.

The credit crisis and global market turmoil are also to be discussed, but with central bankers absent, the heads can still most likely avoid saying anything specific about interest rates and currencies.

Overall, the summit's main goal will be demonstrating confidence that they can "work through the oil crisis without causing the global economy to sink down," said Tom Cooley, dean of New York University's Stern School of Business.

Asia stocks

Yesterday, Asian stocks slipped as oversold high crude oil prices deepened to jeopardize earnings and curb consumer spending.

This week has been punctuated by stagflation fears and disheartening sentiment after the Dow Jones Industrial average slipped into a bear market this week, down 20 percent from its October highs, joining Asia markets and pushing investors into safety-first mode.

The unfavorable combination of little growth and high inflation, known as stagflation, has caused many analysts to cut their expectations for economic growth and encouraged investors to pull back on their willingness to take risks for higher returns.

"Asia is suffering from its own inflationary bout," said Sanjay Mathur, an economist with RoyalBank of Scotland in Singapore. "What is the most important feature is that central banks are having monetary policy to be tighter at a time when headwinds from the US are increasing. All this contributes to the rise in the risk premium to Asia assets."

Japan's Nikkei share average fell for a 12th day in a row, the longest string of losses in 54 years, with a broad swathe of companies dragging the index down 0.2 percent.

US markets yesterday were closed for the holiday.

In decline

The pan-Asia MSCI index fell 0.2 percent, adding to the year's 16.3-percent decline.

Asia-Pacific shares traded outside of Japan climbed 0.2 percent, according to an MSCI index, but had hit a 19-month low on Thursday. The benchmark has fallen 8 percent this month and has yet posted a weekly gain since May.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng bucked the broad declining trend and rose 1.1 percent.

Australia's benchmark index also rose 1.3 percent.

US jobs data released on Thursday showed separate car workers for a sixth straight month in June for the longest such streak since 2002 and the country's vast service sector unexpectedly contracted, underscoring the economy's frailty.

Compounding inflation fears, oil prices rose to a record high of $145.85 a barrel, up more than 50 percent this year.

Stephen Jen, global head of currency strategy with Morgan Stanley in London, said high energy prices are a "game changer" for Asia and will have a long-lasting impact for the region and particularly be China.

"While many investors are concerned about inflation containment and the effects of monetary reactions, higher price levels of energy, not just inflation, will hurt Asia," he said in a note to clients. "In other words, even if oil/energy prices stabilize now, this will be a very significant shock to Asia, especially China." AP/Reuters

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MMDA can use dump for 6 more months

Rizal prov'l board okays extension of landfill use for Metro trash

By Beverly T. Mabinidad

THE PROVINCIAL BOARD OF RIZAL GAVE THE Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) the green light to dump trash again at the sanitary landfill in Rodriguez town.

Rizal Governor Casimiro Ynares III told the Inquirer yesterday that the provincial board approved the MMDA's request for a six-month permit to use the 19-hectare Rizal Provincial Sanitary Landfill.

The provincial board, Ynares said, approved the request on Thursday afternoon but the actual resolution still had to be signed.

Ynares said they were hoping the MMDA would be able to find alternative dumps before the temporary permit expired.

This is the second six-month permit given by Rizal to MMDA.

The Rodriguez landfill, which is operated by the privately-owned AMWM International, was originally intended as a dump only for trash from Rizal residents.

It was earlier opened to the MMDA for six months—from Nov. 6, 2007 to May 6—to serve as a "receiving garbage crisis."

On May 6, Ynares gave a provisional 45-day permit on MMDA's request.

MMDA garbage haulers were barred every at the landfill when the 45-day permit expired on June 21. The MMDA and some Metro Manila mayors were able to negotiate a 15-day extension on June 27.

Of the 6,000 metric tons (MT) of trash produced by Metro Manila residents everyday, 3,000-4,000 MT are brought to the Rodriguez landfill. The rest is brought to other landfills in Navotas City and Bay 18 in Manila and to the provinces of Bulacan and Laguna.

Meanwhile, environmental advocates dismissed Rodriguez Mayor Isidro Ciangco's "waste-to-energy" solution. Ciangco assured the MMDA to bring garbage to the open dump to heal his town's P1.5 billion methane-capture power generation plant.

Bangon Kalikasan Movement president Joey Papa told the Inquirer yesterday that Ciangco's proposal was a blatant violation of the law because it encouraged local governments to produce more waste to fuel a methane plant.

"His waste-to-energy scheme is horrible and dangerous. How will you encourage LGUs to manage their waste ecologically if you justify the generation of waste for the creation of energy?" said Papa.

Citing contractual obligations to the Rizal-Bliss Montana Power Corporation (MMPC), Ciangco, in a press conference Wednesday even offered a 40 percent discount to the MMDA as an incentive.

Papa said encouraging more waste, even if for energy generation, was contrary to the guiding under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act that aimed to teach city residents to manage their wastes through segregation and recycling.

WHAT SIGN!
Ignoring a sign forbidding visitors from feeding the animals at the Manila Zoo, a young boy offers food to a friendly ostrich. The zoo, one of the city's cheap attractions, attracts many visitors on weekends.

Court junks GMA suit vs ABS-CBN exec

By Marlon Ramos

A REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC) judge in Quezon City has junked the case filed by broadcast company GMA Network Inc. against veteran broadcast journalist Ludy Cruz-Valdez and network rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp for breach of contract.

In a ruling, Judge Tita Marilyn Payoyo-Villordon of QC RTC Branch 224 argued that Valdez did not violate the terms and agreements of the "exclusive talent agreement" she had with GMA network when she joined ABS-CBN in Nov. 11, 2003, a month after the original June 2006.

Valdez said Valdez could not be charged with breach of contract as she already terminated her engagement with GMA as "productive and manager of news" after she filed her resignation letter.

Giving the Philippine Labor Code, the judge argued that Valdez' resignation was legal and did not constitute any illegal act.

"The court has found that defendant Valdez, in executing her work as vice president for News of ABS CBN, has not violated the talent agreement," the judge said in her June 23 decision.

In fact, Villordon said it was GMA network which violated the contract when its officials, led by vice president for News and Public Affairs Marissa Flores, did not give Valdez any assignment and compensation as talent almost a month before her resignation took effect.

The judge ordered GMA network, which filed the civil case on Dec. 15, 2005, to pay Valdez with the promised compensation she was when the broadcast journalist decided to give her talent fee.

"I feel vindicated, " Valdez said because. "The case made me look unprofessional."

Last-ditch effort in Leviste case

By DJ Yap

SENIOR STATE PROSECUTOR EMMANUEL Velasco made a last-ditch effort yesterday to get the court's permission to present rebuttal evidence against former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste, who has been accused of killing his aide. Leviste had confessed to the killing but said it was in self-defense.

Earlier, Judge Oliver Almonte of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 ruled that the prosecution "abandoned or waived" its right to present more evidence when Velasco failed to attend the June 23 hearing.

Almonte said the matter was now deemed submitted for resolution and a ruling would be issued soon.

Velasco said he could reduce the number of rebuttal witnesses from 18 to five, to include a doctor who would testify that the aide, Rafael de los Alas, was shot point-blank.

The other witnesses would debunk defense claims that de los Alas drank and smoked, and arrived early for work on the day he was killed, Velasco said.

In oral arguments yesterday, the prosecutor said his absence was "pure human error," thinking the hearing was scheduled for 2 p.m. instead of 9 a.m. "Nobody is infallible," he said, as he showered the wrong entry in his personal calendar.

Nonoy Capulo, Leviste's lawyer, objected strongly to Velasco's request, saying the prosecution's rebuttal witnesses had been impromptu, nonmaterial and irrelevant.

Capulo said the other witnesses the prosecution wanted to present would only talk about matters that were already discussed.

The defense lawyer said Velasco's "negligence" should be considered an abandonment or waiver of prosecution's right to present further evidence.

Task force to make streets safe for women

By Jeannette I. Andrade

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) yesterday proposed the creation of a task force that would ensure the safety of women on the streets of Quezon City.

The newly organized "Women Initiative for Streets" and "Women against Poverty and Crime" networks pointed out the need for such a body, adding that women were usually preyed on by motorcycle-riding robbers.

Representatives of various NGOs in the city met with Quezon City Police District (QCPD) director Senior Supt. Magnaye Eduardo, city and barangay officials to discuss the proposal.

The networks, including Akbayan, Women's Health, Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates, Amnesty International, Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates, and the Women's Medical Circle, who maintain offices in Quezon City at the fault of the Quezon City Hall, expressed alarm over the increasing street crime incidents in the city.

Judy Rita Ebro, a member of one of the NGOs and coordinator for an international organization of civil society groups: "Women can no longer walk freely without fear of being robbed or their bags snatched by motorcycle-riding robbers."

Ebro said she herself was victimized twice, most recently on June 29. Her bag was snatched by men riding motorcycle in motorcycle, causing her to fall and break her wrist.

"It seems incidents like these have become daily occurrences in the city," she lamented, adding that walking had become a dangerous habit.

Sonia Strasburg, who will represent the networks in meetings with Quezon City government and QCPD officials, said she hoped the task force would be "sustainable."

Yesterday's dialogue, she said, revealed "gaps" in the peace and order programs that had to be filled.

The task force, Strasburg said the hopeful, would consist of barangay officials from Central, Teachers' Village East, Teachers' Village West, Tatalon, Maytalon, and UP Village, as well as representatives of NGOs and QCPD.

The QCPD offered to train local communities through programs set up by the task force. Strasburg said increased visibility of security people, including policemen and barangay patrols, would be the primary solution to the problem.

Ebro Manalang the NGOs said more again with the QCPD and barangay officials, as well as representatives of the City Development Council and the business sector, to formalize the creation of the task force.

4 suspected robbery gang members killed in Taguig City

By Julie M. Aurelio

FOUR SUSPECTED ROBBERS, including their alleged leader, were shot dead yesterday morning at a police checkpoint in Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

Inspector Capital Region Police Office director Geary Barias identified the dead suspects as Joaquin "Dentisto" Tanz, alleged leader of the Bonifacio group that specializes in payroll robberies, and three others only known as Senior, Junior and Jess Tangbasi.

Supt. Alfred Corpuz, Taguig chief of police, said two of the suspects, who were on board an IX van, died on the spot. The other two were declared dead on arrival at the Capitol ng Maynila.

A fifth suspect escaped on a motorcycle, Corpuz said.

"Along with the Southern Police District, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, we have been monitoring their movements in the city for some time," Corpuz said.

The suspects were aboard a maroon IX van with plate number UMH 748 while another was on a motorcycle when they came across the checkpoint at 1:15 a.m. in the vicinity of McKinley Road.

SPO3 director Chief Supt. Lutas Verzon said they set up the mobile checkpoint after receiving information that the group would pull a payroll heist at a construction firm in Bonifacio Global City.

Verzon told the lawmen the team, led by Supt. Ronie Dagdagdawan, was shot at by the suspects. The policemen fired back, killing two robbers instantly.

Barias, who was also at the site, said they recovered a cal. 45 pistol and a cal. 38 revolver as the arms. "Fortunately no one among our policemen was injured in the encounter," he added.

Police are conducting follow-up operations to arrest the fifth suspect and other members of the gang.

Corpuz also ordered additional checkpoints to be put up at Bonifacio Global City.

Guidelines for club reopening drafted

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE TAGUIG CITY GOVERNMENT HAS drafted guidelines for the reopening of the controversial Embassy Super Club and Fly bars.

In a phone interview, Jeffe Minglana of the Business Permits and License Office (BPLO) said the guidelines were drafted in the security arrangements inside and outside club premises.

"Basically we are asking them to double their security to prevent altercations or fights in their establishments," he told the Inquirer.

The city's peace and order committee that drafted the guidelines is composed of representatives of the police, the public order and safety office, city councilors and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP).

As for allegations of drug use and sale, the city government said it would require that drug-sniffing K-9 dogs check the premises for the presence of illegal substances.

"Our draft guidelines require the two bars to have at least one K-9 dog posted at each entrance. The Embassy has three entrances, while the Fly has two.

Minglana said reports involving drugs were still unverified, adding that they had no strong evidence that would merit imposing sanctions against the bars.

Minglana said both establishments currently had four security guards. The city government would ask the Embassy Club and Cafe bar to add four more for the bars.

"We will also ask them to provide more bouncers to make sure one is just metro away from each other. There should be enough bouncers to break up any fight," Minglana said.

Under the draft guidelines, the number of cameras in the bars would be doubled from the original 40 to ensure maximum monitoring.

The city government earlier closed down the two bars in Fort Bonifacio Global City after a giant fire fatally engulfed a building near patrons.

Mayor Freddie Tiñga, however, said the bars might be allowed to reopen if management complied with certain guidelines.

The draft guidelines are set to be approved next week by the peace and order committee.

Minglana said they were also looking into the concern of the city's BFP that the two bars were often overcrowded.

"The BFP fears that because of the overcrowding, a stampede might occur as in the fire in Ozone disco in 1996," he explained.

The peace and order committee also suggested that the Embassy and Fly be restricted if more fights occurred. Citing police statistics, Minglana said there were at least four to five fights a month inside and outside the bars.

Murder suspect now a gov't official

MAKATI JUDGE REYNALDO M. Laigo's ruling that the arrest and detention of journalists at the Peninsula Manila Hotel siege was legal has set a precedent for future coverage of conflicts by the media.

Henceforth, police can arrest media persons who disobey orders to stay out of sight during deadly confrontations between the authorities and outlaw elements.

I said "other" and not "lawless" elements because the other party could be persons involved a coup against a corrupt government.

Which side is making anyone the authorities supporting a corrupt government or the dissident coup plotters?

Using funds to the Laigo decision.

The judge's ruling goes against the freedom of the press provision in our Constitution and the people's right to know.

If the media were not in the Peninsula, who would have reported to the public fights between the barricaded police/military forces and the unarmed coup plotters?

If the media were not there, you think Sen. Antonio Trillanes III and Brig. Gen. Danny Lim, the "coup" leaders, would have been treated gently by unscrupulous and hotheaded policemen and soldiers?

* * *

HERE'S a message to Laigo and his Ric Media: will not be deterred by your malicious gratuitous coverage of events of great public interest.

If your concern is our safety, that's our problem and not yours.

Our job is to cover the news values and relevance it's taking place.

Laigo should have taken that into consideration before making his decision.

* * *

These legislators said their names were on the list of President Gloria's messenger in the US visit, but they didn't make the trip.

Theologian City Rep. Ed Zialcita wondered why his name was on the list when he didn't go.

Bukidnon Rep. Jose Zubiri III said he decided not join the party after he found out the coverage was "not kept."

Bukidnon Rep. Lorna Silverio said she was not with the US entourage.

The women legislators said she was in Manila all along attending to legal matters.

* * *

The head of a vital government agency was once charged in court with kidnapping with homicide.

How come this didn't work against his appointment?

The official was charged, along with several others, for the kidnap-slaying of a German national in the 1990s.

The confessed kidnapper had previously identified the official as the mastermind.

However, the Court of Appeals acquitted the official on a technicality.

The police admitted that they did not have a warrant when they arrested him.

There are now, some justices at the appellate court would be hotheaded.

SAFETY DRIVE Manila Police District Director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, National Capital Region Police Office Chief Director Geary Barias, PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan and Smart's Danilo Mejia officials launch the "Be Safe, Be Smart" drive with the distribution of promo materials in schools, malls, markets, and other strategic areas in the city.

FOR SALE

Condominium Units

P400,000.00/unit

Unit Nos. 406A & 805A
Area: 31.50 sq.m. – 1 bedroom

Central Park Condominium 1
Gen. Tinio Street, Pasay City

For Details, Call:

Domeng or Erwin
Tel. Nos. 403-07-47/403-09-25
or Ruby at Cel# 0917-8251500

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on July 31, 2008, 11:00 a.m., 6th Floor PSBA Conference Room, DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City for the Real Estate Property described below:

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM SELLING PRICE
#8808 P. Victor Street, Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City	2,000 sq. meters or covered by TCT #179888	P 60,000,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the property to determine its actual condition before the bidding.
2. To submit the bid in DBP's official bid form available at the MKO, 7/SM Basement, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and condition which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

The above property is available for inspection at #8808 P. Victor Street, Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., July 7 – 30, 2008. Details, Bidding Rules and Bid Forms are available from the following:

MR. CARLOS S. GATCHALIAN
Tel. no.: 818-9511
Locals – 2000/2001

MR. ALFREDO S. BAGASAN
Tel. no.: 810-9511
Locals – 2000/2001

(Sgd.) JOEL PABLO G. BUENO
Vice President

Republic of the Philippines
HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

NOTICE OF SALE

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is offering for sale by way of sealed bids the following properties:

LA CHEA HEIGHTS, Bantal Road, Tandang Sora, Quezon City

BLK	TCT NO.	BLD.	LOT	AREA	AMO	MIN. SELLING PRICE	TYPE	REMARKS
1	004-2008000...	1	1	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	2	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	3	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	4	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	5	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	6	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	7	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	8	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	9	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	10	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	11	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	12	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	13	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	14	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	15	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	16	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	17	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	18	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	19	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	20	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	21	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	22	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	23	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	24	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	25	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	26	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	27	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	28	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	29	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	30	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	31	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	32	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	33	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	34	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	35	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	36	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	37	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	38	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	39	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	40	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	41	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	42	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	43	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	44	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	45	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	46	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	47	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	48	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	49	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	50	1	1	2,110,000.00	Townhouse	Vacant

GEN. TOMAS HOMES, J.P Rizal St., Brgy. San Juan 1, Gen. Trias, Cavite

BLK	TCT NO.	BLD.	LOT	AREA	AMO	MIN. SELLING PRICE	TYPE	REMARKS
1	004-2008000...	1	1	1	1	1,110,000.00	House & Lot	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	2	1	1	1,110,000.00	House & Lot	Vacant

LAS PALMAS VILLAGE, Poblacion 3, Sto. Tomas, Batangas

BLK	TCT NO.	BLD.	LOT	AREA	AMO	MIN. SELLING PRICE	TYPE	REMARKS
1	004-2008000...	1	1	1	1	1,110,000.00	House & Lot	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	2	1	1	1,110,000.00	House & Lot	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	3	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	4	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	5	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	6	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	7	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	8	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	9	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	10	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	11	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	12	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	13	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	14	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	15	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	16	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	17	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	18	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	19	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	20	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	21	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	22	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	23	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	24	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	25	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	26	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	27	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	28	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	29	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	30	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	31	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	32	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
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1	004-2008000...	1	36	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
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1	004-2008000...	1	48	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	49	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant
1	004-2008000...	1	50	1	1	1,110,000.00	Lot Only	Vacant

*Titles to the properties are on-going consolidation.
** For re-subdivision.

For inquiries, please visit the Asset Management Department of the HGC 9/F SSS Bldg. 1 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR IRREGULARITIES IN BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL P. DE LOS SANTOS
Vice President
Asset Management & Operation Group

Metro Briefs

'I did it'

THE 33-YEAR-OLD housewife who is confessing to killing a 10-year-old former barangay councilor early Wednesday morning, yesterday admitted to the crime, Director Leocadio Versoza, of the Manila Police District homicide division, said murder charges were filed yesterday against Michael Corcuera. Sin Manila Prosecutor's Office. Dawang, a member of the anti-fan crew of Manila Pavilion Hotel, confessed that he killed Councilor Abagon last Tuesday because he thought she was a pig. Abagon was found dead inside her room with a slit throat. Police ruled out robbery as the motive because the victim's belongings were intact. Dawang, who was a boarder in the victim's house, said he cannot hold down early Wednesday morning and remembered having blacked out before killing the victim who was then asleep. Dawang denied he was under the influence of drugs when the incident happened. He also admitted that he was not pressured into admitting the crime. Police said they have yet to determine his motive for killing Abagon. The G. Santos

Studes held for rape

MANILA police arrested on Thursday afternoon four students of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, subpoenaed while taking part in raping a female freshman student inside the school campus last month. The suspects, aged 18 to 19, were charged in the Manila Prosecutor's Office but were turned over to the Manila Youth and Reception Center. The suspects were also tested for further investigation. Supt. Jimmy Tin said they were looking into the possibility that the suspects participated in initiation rites for sorority/fraternity. Noel C. Ibañez

Biofuels caused 75-percent increase in food prices, says leaked WB report

LONDON—BIOFUELS HAVE caused world food prices to increase by 75 percent, according to the findings of an unpublished World Bank report published in The Guardian newspaper on Friday.

The daily said the report was finished in April but was not published to avoid embarrassing the US government, which has championed plans devised from it to have pushed up prices by only three percent.

Biofuels, which supporters claim are a "greener" alternative to using fossil fuel and run powerstation gas, emissions, and rising food prices will be on the agenda when G8 leaders meet in Japan next week for their annual summit.

The report's author, a senior World Bank economist, reasoned that contrary to claims by US President George W. Bush, increased demand from India and China has not been the cause of rising food prices.

"Rapid income growth in developing countries has not led to large increases in global grain consumption and was not a major factor responsible for the large price increases," the report said.

Droughts in Australia have also had a significant impact, it added. Instead, European and US drives for greater use of biofuels has had the biggest effect.

The European Union has mooted using biofuels for up to 10 percent of all transport fuels by 2020 as part of an increase in use of renewable energy.

All petrol and diesel in Britain has had to include a biofuels component of at least 2.5 percent since April this year.

"Without the increase in biofuels, global reserves and commitments would not have declined appreciably and grain increases due to other factors would have been moderate," the report said.

It added that the drive for biofuels has distorted food markets by diverting grain away from food for fuel, encouraging farmers to set aside land for its production, and sparked financial speculation programs.

But Brazil's transformation of sugar cane into fuel has not had such a dramatic impact, the report said.

"The burden of food prices continued in the study rise by 140 percent between 2002 and this February," The Guardian said.

"The report estimates that higher energy and fertilizer prices accounted for an increase of only 25 percent, while biofuels have been responsible for a 75 percent jump over that period." AFP

Indonesia raids foil JI plan of massive attack on Westerners

JAKARTA—INDONESIAN POLICE HAVE dealt another hammer blow to Southeast Asia's most feared terror network with raids that yielded 18 suspects and could loosen ties of bombs and conspirators, analysts said.

Terrorism experts said AFP data needs accurate appraisal to have wrapped a dangerous cell with regional links which was poised to launch a massive attack, probably against Western tourists on the island of Sumatra.

But they warned it did not mean the end of explosive militant grouping Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) or its arrest remains factor leader, fugitive Malaysian terrorists Noordin Mohammad Top who is blamed for the 2002 Bali bombings.

"You can't overstate from one set of arrests that the danger has gone. We don't know who else might be able to act as surrogates for Noordin's group," said analyst Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group think tank.

Police said the cells arrested around the south Sumatra provincial capital of Palembang from Saturday to Wednesday were connected to Noordin and included a Singaporean bomb-maker, believed to be Mohammad Hasan.

Noordin is the subject of a massive manhunt for allegedly masterminding a string of bombings against Western targets in Indonesia, including the Bali attacks which killed more than 200 people.

He rails himself leader of al-Qaida for the Malay Archipelago has more describe him as head of the most extreme faction of JI, which has members across Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and southern Thailand.

"The arrests are likely to lead investigators to a trove of intelligence about Noordin's factions and its links abroad, especially to Singapore and Malaysia, analysts said.

Among the improvised bombs packed with bullets to inflict maximum damage, police said investigators also found 18 computer hard drives in the Palembang safe house.

"It looks like this [cell] is fairly significant and it could be very significant depending on what they find on those computers. It would suggest that this was a very large operation," Singapore-based terrorism analyst John Harrison told AFP.

Analysts said the suspects could lead investigators to Noordin, who is still on the run even as dozens of his most loyal deputies have been captured or killed by Indonesian police since 2002.

The cell was also likely to yield information on other fugitives including Dhe Antarun Indonesi, JI's alleged emir in Singapore who escaped from prison there on Feb. 27 and is still at large, reportedly in Indonesia.

Police said one of the detainees identified only as MH was a Singaporean national and associate of Hasnat who received military training in Afghanistan and reportedly has met al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Israel seeks direct talks with Syria 'very soon'

AMMAN—Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert called on Thursday for quickly starting face-to-face negotiations with Syria after a third round of indirect peace talks mediated by Turkey ended with an agreement to meet again. "With the Syrians, we are talking seriously and, in my estimation, very soon the negotiations will have to be direct," Olmert told private-media conference in the southern Israeli resort city of Eilat. "They will not be able to continue on this mode or relationship we currently being held." The third round of talks between the long-time foes started in Istanbul on Tuesday and ended on Thursday with an agreement to hold a fourth round of indirect negotiations in Turkey in late July, a Turkish government source told Reuters. At that meeting, the sailers will decide whether to move to direct talks starting in August, when the fifth and sixth rounds are scheduled to take place, the source said. A Turkish foreign ministry statement described the talks, the first in eight years, as constructive. The government source said the negotiators were beginning to discuss "core issues." Reuters

China agrees to more talks on Tibet

BEIJING—China agreed on Thursday to hold another round of discussions with envoys of the Dalai Lama before the end of the year, but officials declined to say if the two sides made any progress after the negotiations that ended this week. The outcome of this round is talks has taken on international significance in the aftermath of the riots in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, and a crackdown on protests in March. The United States and seven European countries have called on China to engage in direct discussions with the Dalai Lama. He exiled Tibetan spiritual leader. AFP

Singapore woman jailed for dog attack on maid

SINGAPORE—A Singaporean housewife who set her dog on an Indonesian maid was sentenced to 29 months in jail for what a prosecutor called one of the worst cases of maid abuse a newspaper said on Friday. Tay Hwee Hoon, 30, received the sentence in court on Thursday. The Straits Times reported. Prosecutor Lim Tse Haw said the bites from a small shih tzu left the maid, whom the newspaper did not name, with 11 bruises on her right thigh and marks on a finger, the report said. The September 2006 attack aroused screenings of violence in which Tay slapped the maid's face, pulled her hair, and threw a stool, a dog bowl and a knife at the then 23 year-old, the newspaper said, citing her testimony. Tore Tay reportedly commanded her dog: "Fatic, bite," and hurled the television volume to drown out the young woman's screams. AFP

Billionaire leaves government post in Russia

MOSCOW—Roman A. Abramovich is a billionaire Russian investor, a soccer club owner and a bachelorette. He is a favorite of the gossip columnists and a friend to the Kremlin. Sometime, he has also found time to govern Chukotka, an impoverished, icy expanse close to Alaska on Russia's far east. That is, until Thursday, when Abramovich officially resigned as governor of the region. Abramovich stepped down "at his own request," the Kremlin news service said in a statement. It gave no explanation, but Abramovich said through a spokesperson that his work in Chukotka had been successful and that it was time to move on. Since becoming governor in 2001, Abramovich has used some of his vast wealth to revive Chukotka, which was left to rot after the Soviet collapse and the subsequent departure of military installations. "When he came to the region, it was in a state of ruins," said John Mann, the spokesperson for Abramovich's office. "Over the past several years, his administration has not only overcome that crisis, but also greatly improved the standard of living." While Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, the former billionaire owner of Yukos Oil Co. and a critic of Putin, sits in a Siberian jail, Abramovich makes his quarterly to London, where he owns several luxury homes and the Chelsea football club. AFP

Wildfires threaten California town

BIG SUR, Calif.—Plies of charred rubble smoldered near California's scenic coastal highway as a ferocious wildfire descended on the tourist town of Big Sur, destroying vacation homes and sending bears, deer and other forest animals fleeing toward the Pacific Ocean. The stubborn blaze, which has burned more than 41 hectares in the Los Padres National Forest, was just one of hundreds raging around the state. And officials on Thursday reported California's first firefighter death this year—a driver who collapsed on the fire line in Mendocino County. No crash barrier has burned near Big Sur that animals have been forced out of their hideouts and onto the roads. Big roads like mammals wouldn't go dead in dens and squirrels. A total of 367 wildfires are burning in the state, most ignited by lightning, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire, and the US Forest Service. That figure is down from a peak of roughly 1,500 fires just a few days ago. AP

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
MANDARIN INSURANCE CO., INC. [illegible]	Arunachalam Lakshmi Narayanan Thiruvengadam Indian	Senior Vice President Deputy Chief Operating Officer
KOREAN AIRLINES CO. LTD. [illegible]	Kyung Ho Jeon Korean	Work and Labor Benefit Maintenance Manager
ZTE PHILIPPINES, INC. [illegible]	Xinsong Li Chinese	Account Manager
MOSSY GROUP OF COMPANIES [illegible]	Wenzhong Yin Chinese	Assistant General Manager
R.P. DE GUZMAN BOOKKEEPING & CONSULTANCY SERVICES [illegible]	Peter Bruce Carney American	Consultant
NEWRON GLOBAL INC. [illegible]	Frederick Carl Rodriguez Tabuena American	Chairman of the Board and President
R.P. DE GUZMAN BOOKKEEPING & CONSULTANCY SERVICES [illegible]	Wayne Savage Landrick American	Consultant
HSB PLASTIC MANUFACTURING, INC. [illegible]	Chi Chak Wong Chinese	Chairman of the Board
SUNSHOULDS TOY & GIFT MANILA INC. [illegible]	Edward Paul Hatton British	Foreign Market Technical Director
SIU PAN & MANN SNACK COUNTER INC. [illegible]	Jen Yang Korean	Assistant Supervisor
TOWSON & TAYLOR INTERNATIONAL (PHILS.), INC. [illegible]	Peter Buck Cameron New Zealand	Deputy Global Treasurer Engineer [illegible] Team Leader
LARSEN INTERNATIONAL PH., INC. [illegible]	Thomas Lee Nelson American	Technical Consultant
GEST HOMO ASSOCIATES CORPORATION [illegible]	Ji Yang Hon Korean	Marketing Manager
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED [illegible]	Rajesh Gopal Pati Indian	Systems Analyst
GEST HOMO ASSOCIATES CORPORATION [illegible]	Young Tai Kim Korean	Operations Manager
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED [illegible]	Amanpreet Singh Gurpreet Singh Sodi Indian	Systems Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED [illegible]	Brahmanandam Avadi Indian	Systems Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED [illegible]	Avinash Tak Indian	Systems Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED [illegible]	Vamy Venkatesh Indian	Systems Analyst
MALC TELEBROADBAND, INC. [illegible]	Michael Lowry Australian	Vice President Marketing
INTEC RESOURCES PHILIPPINES, INC. [illegible]	Jon Sean Pedersen Danish	Executive Vice President
HEGER PROPERTY CORPORATION [illegible]	Jillian Lim Korean	Korean Translator and Spl. Asst.
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Lily Ivan Ho Taiwanese	Marketing Officer
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Dinda Indonesian	Operation Analyst
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Yee Chee Hoe Malaysian	Customer Service
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Fan Hon Lai Malaysian	Operation Analyst
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Kuan Hon Lee Malaysian	Accounts Officer
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Khoo Lee Ng Malaysian	Customer Service
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Sun Yu Ng Malaysian	Customer Service
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Mina Fahmi Indonesian	Accounts Officer
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Lee Kee Fah Malaysian	Operation Analyst
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Hans Ivo Sen Taiwanese	Operation Analyst
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Kee Jee Tee Malaysian	Operation Analyst
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Dyana Indonesian	Operation Analyst
LASPO INCORPORATED [illegible]	Lo Kee Tong Malaysian	Operation Analyst
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ARMANDO G. ARMAMENTO
OIC, Regional Director

The WORLD

Elise Lorraine B. Gonzo

Betancourt reunited with children

BOGOTA—INGRID BETANCOURT, THE SYMBOL OF REBEL hostages in Colombia, hugged and wept with her children for the first time in six years on Thursday after a military rescue that dealt a severe blow to already-weakened guerrillas.

The rescue was a coup for US ally President Alvaro Uribe and raised the possibility that Latin America's oldest left-wing insurgency is in collapse after it was duped into handing its top bargaining chip to the military in the jungle.

Betancourt, a French-Colombian citizen kidnapped during her 2002 presidential campaign, threw her arms around her two adult children, their eyes tearful a day after her captors unwittingly freed the three Americans and 11 Colombians.

"When I'm feeling sorry is something very close to paradise," Betancourt told reporters at an airport in Bogota.

"There are my babies, my pride, my reason for living, my light, my moon, my stars," she said. "Forgive me for saying it, but I think they are very good looking."

Her son and daughter, Lorenzo, 18, and Melanie, 22, flew in to Pinto with Foreign Rescue Minister Bernard Kouchner as soon as they got news of their mother's rescue from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

Betancourt, 46, could not wait for them to exit the plane. She leaped up the steps to smother them with kisses inside.

She said her captivity in recent years had driven her to think of suicide. She was punished for several escape attempts, chained at the neck in a cave or made to walk barefoot.

Despite looking gaunt and depressed in photographs taken during her captivity, Betancourt appeared in sound health.

The bloodless rescue operation increased public confidence in the embattled Uribe, whose father was killed in a botched FARC kidnapping two decades ago.

He is hugely popular for his assisted offensive and his growth-oriented economic policies. The rescue cleared up Uribe's support as a time when many of his followers want to change the constitution to let him run for a third term in 2010.

Stocks and the peso currency surged as investors showed increased political confidence in Colombia.

The rescue followed the death of three FARC leaders this year and a call from the group's top ally, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, for them to step down for peace.

The FARC, considered a terrorist organization by US and European officials, threatens to use the rough cocaine trade and fill its rich hundreds of rebels, mainly police and soldiers.

But the outlawed rebel army once a 17,000-member force able to frequently attack major cities, has been driven back by Uribe into remote areas and now has about 9,000 combatants.

"The FARC is terminally ill and every day it is closer to disappearing for good," Rodrigo Pardo, a top foreign policy adviser to Uribe, told Reuters.

The United States said it was aware of the rescue plan, but stressed that it was a Colombian operation.

Reuters

FORMER hostage Ingrid Betancourt (center) holds the hands of her children Melanie and Lorenzo after her children arrived from France in a military base in Bogota on July 2. Betancourt, three US military contractors and 11 other hostages were rescued by the Colombian military from rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia on Wednesday. AP

Rebel disarray, acting lessons, payback all part of rescue

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA—THE PLAN WAS nothing if not audacious: A turncoat persuades rebels it is time together their most prized hostages and snatch them 240 km through Colombian wilderness. A stealth force disguised commander pilots well-acting him on land in a helicopter and grab the rebels once handing them over.

The mission was a success: three US military contractors, former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and 11 others held captive in the Colombian jungles.

Its success hinged entirely on planners said on Thursday, on a near-total breakdown in communication between the isolated guerrilla rebels and their commanders—the sort of stroke of pure of intense US-Colombian military operation that has nationally weakened Latin America's last major rebel army.

True, and a lot of revenge.

"When I first got briefed, I said, 'This is unreal? Can this really work?'" US ambassador William Brownfield told The Associated Press. "And it really, the answer was yes."

Wednesday's stunning rescue graphic scenes led to protests in the escape last year of a Colombian who had spent time in captivity with the three Americans and Betancourt.

But it began to gain steam only in January, when Colombian intelligence determined that the hostages were being moved, said Gen. Freddy Padilla, Colombia's armed forces chief.

The Colombians installed US-provided sensors over allied rebel encountering defectors...which can see units and you...along those that use the only transport route through dense jungles. US and Colombian officials said US surveillance planes using sophisticated radio and satellite phone eavesdropping and employed foreign intelligence, they said.

It used February a Colombian-piloted spotted the three Americans—Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell and Thomas Howes—walking in the Apaporis River under guard, the first sight of the Americans since their surveillance plane crashed in 2003.

For four days, "our backs ears on them," Brownfield said.

But a rescue operation was dismissed two months called off.

"The president's order was: rescue, yes, but without even a drop of blood," said a Colombian army general directly involved in the mission, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to disclose details.

The general said a drug-addled member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) had agreed to spearhead the operation. The turncoat, he said, was trained by both the rebels' high command and by the leader of the 1st front, which was holding the hostages.

"The FARC's commander(s) do not see deceived," Padilla said. He said the command said sensitive information that it would misperceive messages to convince. The breakdown in the rebels' command has made it easier to flip disillusioned rebels to the government's side, said, indeed, Padilla said no or three one-dissident agent are involved in the mission.

But the turncoat was the key ele-ment based Guards Aguilar Ramirez, alias Cuna, the commander of the 1st Front, that top commanders wanted the 15 hostages moved to a rallying point, the general directly involved in the operation told the AP.

The turncoat was agent with the FARC because his own commander had taken a lover and Cuna stung from him, the general said. This was payback.

US spy satellites helped track the hostages on a month-long journey that began on May 31 and ended with Ahmbamba's rescue.

Troops and chase on. Brownfield said a team of 100 people at the US Embassy who had been dedicated to securing the American hostages' release and worked closely with the Colombians running the operation.

"The truth of the matter is, we have actually come together in a way that we much have in the United States of America, except with long time allies, principally State allies," Brownfield said of relations with Colombia's security forces, which have received more than $4 billion in military aid since 2000.

Several times, he said, the US government had to make decisions—"at the highest levels"—about proceeding.

On Monday, President Alvaro Uribe gave the go-ahead, Padilla said.

On Tuesday, the two Russian made Mi-17 helicopters left a military base in the Andean mountain valley, settling down for a uneventful night in a wilderness clearing.

Aboard the choppy that would recover the hostages were four air force personnel in civilian disguise, seven military intelligence agents and the guerrilla turncoat, military officials said. Two of the agents were dressed as rebels, and they set were white, as if representing some sort of humanitarian assistance. All had taken a week and a half of acting lessons, Padilla said.

Shortly after midday on Wednesday the helicopter touched down at the rendezvous point.

One of the agents, posing as a commander, recorded video as the guerrillas on the ground bound the hostages' hands and the crew's last operation, Padilla said. Tying up the hostages was part of the plan.

"There are 14 trained soldiers we're dealing with," Padilla said, referring to the captive Americans and 11 Colombian soldiers or police. "Nobody wanted to risk their savages to overpower the crew."

Once aloft, it was clear and the side-door entry ramp was lifted.

There was no need for Plan B—sending 70 helicopters and 2,000 troops to encircle the hostage holders and urging to persuade them to give up peacefully.

The turncoat is now free and will likely receive a sizable reward from a $500 million government reward fund, the general said.

But the FARC, the rescue could not have come at a worse time. The rebels were already in disarray after losing three senior commanders in March—one killed by government bombs, a second by a turncoat bodyguard and the third, ex-leader Manuel Marulanda, succumbing to a heart attack at age 76.

AP

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molondrino Assistant Editor Francis T. Lachica

33 days to the 29th Summer Olympics
Beijing 2008

RONALD Tolentino of Barangay Ginebra makes a daring drive against Jay-R Reyes of Welcoats.

Kings keep 'Fiesta' q'final hopes alive

Leather, Alexander draw fines for word war

By Jasmine W. Payo

MARK CAGUIOA DELIVERED WITH 20 points as Barangay Ginebra pounced on the still-destroying Welcoat Dragons to keep their chances alive for the remaining outright quarterfinal berth in the Smart PBA Fiesta Cup yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Caguioa scattered 16 in the second half and teamed up with Ronald Tolentino and Jaypee Belencionado to put the Kings in control late in the third period.

The King clubbed in the fifth spot in Forge a tie with Alaska at 9-8 on the penultimate day of the season-ending tournament.

A victory against Alaska on Sunday will assure the Kings of a quarterfinal stint.

Jimes topping third tandem Chris Alexander, who added 20 points, the Kings have won nine of their last 11 outings, including five straight.

Tolentino finished with 24 points, while Belencionado added 16.

Welcoat failed to advance to playoff action with a 4-14 slate.

The Dragons came out strong in the first half, but crumbled in the closing quarters as Caguioa, Tolentino, Belencionado and Jimes Ayaki took turns in the Kings' scoring onslaught.

From a 73-73 standoff late in the third period, the Kings closed out the quarter with a 10-2 surge.

Starting off sluggish, the Kings fell behind by eight points, 50-46, in the second quarter before trimming the gap by down, 53-50, by halftime.

Mercado Caguioa shot a team high 27 points, while Jay-R Reyes scored 13 for the Dragons, who bowed out of the elimination for the fourth straight conference.

The Dragons have only registered a pitiful 7-29 record in their second season in the league.

Meanwhile, the league slapped fines yesterday on Welcoat Terrence Gandeza of Talk 'N Text and Gianlen's Chris Alexander due to a "verbal altercation" during their game last June 29.

Leather (pictured) P5,000 for also "arguing without contact," while Alexander got a P1,000 fine.

Sta. Lucia star Kelly Williams also got a P1,000 sanction for an "unsportsmanlike act of second motion" during the Realtors match versus Purefoods last June 27.

The scores

ERASTA 101—Caguioa 30, Tolentino 24, Alexander 20, Belencionado 16, Ayaki 5, Yeng-Guiao 4, Mamuyac 3, Mark 2, Ibanez 1, Pennell. Substitutes: Reyes(c).

WELCOAT 96—Grimes 21, Reyes 13, Arabis 10, Dungca 9, Ong 7, Sedoy 6, Campano 4, Sedoy 4, Galay 4, Bayani 3, Wainwright 3, Sotelo-Jung 3, Yu, Ramos 2, Dungca 0.

Quarters: 29-23, 53-50, 73-71, 101-96

Inquirer sports ed's mom passes away

CRISPINA SOLIS-BELLONDRIS, WIFE OF PAY ONE LT. VICENTE B. BELLONDRIS (RET.), died on Friday, July 4. She was 81.

She is survived by children and their spouses Emmie and Cesar Mendoza; Percie (deceased) and Alfonso Piao; Myrna and Max Ocampo, Inquirer sports editor Teddyboy and Maria Melanie Gloria and Alex Fernandez; and Julio and Penny Mayano; grandchildren; and sister Estrella.

She resided in the state of the family residence at 58 Jacinto Street, Diana Village, Lipa City. Interment are Sunday, July 6, at Bernal Sanchez cemetery in Ibabaan, Lipa City, after a 11 noon mass at the Fernando Air Base Chapel in AB, Lipa City.

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Pacquiao as RP's Olympic flagbearer?

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MANNY PACQUIAO AS RP FLAG bearer for the Beijing Olympics?

By all means.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco yesterday said he will entertain the board to elect the newly-crowned WBC lightweight champion as the flag bearer of the 15-athlete contingent to China in the opening ceremonies on Aug. 8.

"In keeping with his ethics as only the seems through his excellence in boxing, we are making the (RP Olympic secretariat to work on having him as the country's flag bearer," said Cojuangco.

The development came after Presidential Assistant has expressed desire that Pacquiao (RP the RP colors...an honor usually given to the most illustrious member of the delegation—often Team Philippines walks the parade of nations in the Beijing joint.

MCQUIAO 4.0

Knights claim NCAA lead as Jazul waxes hot

By Cyrell P. Tupas

CAPTAIN NJ JAZUL UNGOREO a season-high 37 points as Letran brought St. Benilde back to earth with an 88-75 triumph that gave the Knights the sole lead in the NCAA collegiate basketball tournament yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

The 22-year-old Jazul knocked in seven triples, including five in the first half, as the Knights outscored a hobbled Blazers side 49-36 in the first half. "Good thing we were able to make the adjustments in the third quarter," the Knights took the lead for good, 51-50, midway in the third quarter on a layup by Jiey Gonzales, before Jazul pulled the ball away from Archie Dasal and drained a triple in front of the Letran bench to extend the lead, 54-50.

The Blazers, who topped Philippine Christian University and Perpetual Help in their first two games, never recovered from there as David aggravated an injury on his right foot.

In the second game, San Sebastian College banged Jose Rizal University, 87-64.

Reynard Jim Vivo finished a three-point play with 27.5 seconds left that shattered a 54-all stalemate and completed the Stags' rally from nine points down in the halftime.

"We finally showed that we are a defensive-minded team," said Stags coach Jorge Gallent, whose team won hold to a season-low 20 points in the first half.

The scores:

First Game

LETRAN 88 – Jazul 37, Intsiglo 12, Favorito 9, Salenga 8, Tolentino 8, Lalata 4, Dungca 4, Adamson 2, Galban 2, delos Santos 2, Pantino 0, Zabarte 0.

ST. BENILDE 75 – Quinahoran 16, Dacla 12, Mendoza 11, Dalisay 10, Pilapil 10, Dasal 7, Cruz 5, Adriano 3, David 2, Gonzales 2, Santos 0.

Quarters: 12-23, 41-36, 63-52, 88-75.

Second Game

SAN SEBASTIAN 87 – Vivo 19, Mariano 16, Reynoso 11, Sabarre 8, Aquino 8, Chavez 5, Dalmacio 5, Rapadas 5, Limpot 0.

JRU 64 – Cruz 19, Alfaro 14, Nuevas 8, Cayco 8, Ayee 6, Rivera 5, Bilando 3, Lanuza 2, Estrada 0.

Quarters: 9-17, 29-32, 58-43, 87-64.

JAZUL

Wide open UAAP sea opens at Big Dome t

By Jeannine W. Poyo and Cyrell P. Tupas

IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT MAKES THE 71ST UAAP season doubly exciting, it is the fact that the title chase in the men's basketball competition is wide open this time.

Shaking for a tough prediction is the emergence of several cluhdown teams expected to put up a tough challenge against the perennial favorites.

"The beauty of collegiate basketball is that anything can happen," said Ust Go Salle coach Franz Pumaren before his Green Archers tuff off their title defense against three-seed Ateneo Blue Eagles tomorrow.

But for today, the focus will be on powerhouse University of the East as last year's runner-up opens its bid for seven-peat against an issues University of Santo Tomas squad in 4 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Eastern University also tipped among the top contenders, kicks off the season earlier against newfashioned Ateneo in the 2 p.m. opener.

University of the Philippines, by having duties coinciding with the state university's centennial celebration, will officially unveil the league with a festive opening ceremony at 1 p.m.

"UST is still a solid team; our problem is we didn't really see UST play during the pre-season, so we just prepared well," said coach Dindo Pumaren, whose Warriors pulled off a 14-game sweep in the eliminations last year before crumbling in the title series against the Archers.

Skipping most of the summer games, the Tigers will be hampered by reigning Most Valuable Player Jerry Cruz.

"We just went to keep up with UE, losing long training sandalan (we don't want to get rusted)," said coach Pido Jarencio. "Through the years, UE is always reasonable. We'll just be ready."

TOP FAVORITES

Warriors hope to bounce back

A BRILLIANT RUN THAT CAME TO A heart-jutting end last season hasn't discouraged the University of the East Warriors from shooting for the top.

But this time, the Warriors have kept their expectations modest.

"The UAAP is really unpredictable," said UE coach Dindo Pumaren. "We had a good run last year, but we fell short in the Finals. It was a learning experience. So this year, we just have to move on and keep on trying."

Pumaren's cautious stance stemmed from a tragic campaign that saw his Warriors moving on a remarkable 14-0 elimination sweep before collapsing against La Salle in the best-of-three championship series.

The Warriors hope to rebound despite the departure of four veterans, including leading scorer Mark Barkeron and Kelvin Gregorio.

"They were our top two players last season, so right away we lost two players averaging in double figures," said Pumaren.

"We now have a smaller lineup so I think we'll have a leader from that point that we're quicker. Some of our newcomers have also improved."

The Warriors will parade seasoned guards led by team captain Manny Ibobbana, Jimmy Marimla, Toto Hierro-dayday, Rudy Lingganay and Paul Lee.

And despite a depleted frontline, the Warriors can still rely on the high-leaping Elmer Espiritu, Hans Thiele and the much-improved Pari Llagas.

The Warriors will also field six rookies including Negros Occidental standouts Jaewald Flores and former Letran hopeless JM Sobla and Lucas Tagueda.

"I think we're still okay," said Pumaren. "But it's hard to predict because almost everyone has a good chance of making it in the Final Four this year. We'll try to get as many wins as possible and hope for the best."

Jeannine W. Poyo

Graduation-hit Archers still deadly

IT'S ALWAYS EASY TO PICK THE defending champion as the season's top seed.

But that isn't the case for the Ust La Salle Green Archers, who have been surprisingly rated as low as fourth by a couple of opposing coaches.

Coach Franz Pumaren, though, knows exactly the reason behind the overrated pre-season rankings.

"If you lose your top point guard in (Yancy de) Ocampo, it's probably debatable," said Pumaren of his Archers' backto-back title chasers.

"We lost key personnel and also quickly big men. I've seen a lot of areas we still need to work on. We're working on it, and hopefully, we'll be ready."

Yet even other squads agree that how season was rebuilt from adversity like the Archers. Just last season, no one expected them to capture the crown a year after surviving some post-suspension from the league.

And the Archers pulled off the impossible feat by mowing down the erstwhile unbeaten University of the East in the best-of-three championship series.

"The competition will be tougher because we have well-balanced teams," said Pumaren.

There's no question that the Archers still remain loaded with the return of sweaty shooter JV Casio along with husky big man Rico Maierhofer and the recruitment of scrappy cog of rookies.

But Pumaren opted to be cautious with Casio and several other support cast coming off serious injuries sustained during the summer.

"Injured players are limited to certain activities, so hopefully everyone will recover in time this season," said Pumaren, who will also welcome back JC Wadhani, Jonas Mangahas, Dexjay Sierra, Simon delos and Buster Maldera.

Former La Salle Zobel standout Joshua Webb, grandson of former pro Freddie Webb, heads the freshman class that includes Manny Ramos' Ateneo-bound, the reigning MVP in the Filipino Indian Basketball League, Jessel Mendoza of the National U Bullpups and Lt Arolla of the San Beda Cubs, former Team B player Steven Ilagmeng and Japan-trained Maui Villanueva. *Jeannine W. Poyo*

MANNY Pacquiao shows off his championship belts during a courtesy call to President Arroyo at the Malacañang Palace. If plans of POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco don't miraculously Pacquiao won't just be holding championship belts, he will also have the honor of carrying the Philippine flag during the parade of nations in the Beijing Olympics.

Pacquiao...

From page A11

This is the first time in the country's Olympic participation when a non-athlete is heading the election. Making it more remarkable is that Pacquiao never even fought in an amateur bout.

"Anybody can be a flag bearer," said POC spokesman Joey Romero when asked whether Pacquiao's being a non-athlete member of the delegation may become an issue. "For as long as you are part of the delegation, you can be a flagbearer."

Romero also said Olympic secretariat Monjing Montelibano is now working on getting several nations for Pacquiao, who just arrived Friday morning after successfully surviving his fourth title in as many weight classes against American David Diaz in Las Vegas.

One thing going against it, however, is the fact that the POC board has already doubled-backing 2007 Southeast Asian Games man surrounding athlete Miguel Molina to be the flag bearer.

Romero also said the board decided on the pre-ills ceremonies and the same body will replace him in favor of the man now considered the greatest Filipino boxer of all time.

The privilege of being a flag bearer used to be reserved for Olympians like Onie Bolado and Josef Manzano.

Pacman wants Hatton first, Valero next

By Roy Luarca

MANNY PACQUIAO'S URGET FOR GREATness didn't end with his demolition of David Diaz for the World Boxing Council lightweight crown on June 28 in Las Vegas.

It started there.

Already acknowledged as the No. 1 pound for pound fighter in the planet, the Filipino ring icon believes he can add more firepower to his already deadly arsenal.

"I want to improve my right hand, more pa," said Pacquiao on a morning show on GMA-7 yesterday.

Boxing pundits, including his trainer Freddie Roach, were satisfied with the way Pacquiao used his right to complement his left hand to bring down the stubborn Diaz with 2:20 to go in the ninth round.

It didn't was as effective his knuckles swelled the morning after the fight, the first time it did an illustrious ring career spanning 13 years.

Pacquiao said apart from specialized training in the gym, he increased the power of his right by learning to swing out and play darts with it.

His last were fights, are on Nov. 8, said he prefers to fight British supreme Ricky Hatton over Venezuelan knockout artist Edwin Valero.

"Kung sila ang pagpilin ng makakalaban, ang gusto ko si Hatton supan si Hatton (If I'm the one to choose my opponent, I want Hatton first and then Valero)."

Like Pacquiao, Roach also wants Hatton next in line as their fight at 140 pounds would be a guaranteed moneymaker, to the tune of at least $10 million for each boxer.

Top Rank president Bob Arum, Pacquiao promoter, however, is keen on having Ramos, 28-0 with 24 knockouts) as Pacquiao's next opponent.

HATTON

SJC derby kicks off today

ANOTHER HEAD-TO-HEAD TWIN-STICK derby with more than 70 flights gets underway today at the popular San Juan Coliseum with the SJC Golfers as host.

The entrants will get P200,000-in guaranteed prize tree among a list of P5,500.

For inquiries, participants and other interested parties may call the SJC office 7250-8000 and 7250-8025.

A total of 36 entries were registered in last week's "SM Da SJC 5-rock derby".

Meanwhile, the SJC 88 3-rock derby streaks on July 7 with more than 100 flights. Matchmaker Flamur Saffer 5-rock derby Lady 80, Richinda 3-rock derby Lady 120, Kim and Ernest 5-rock derby Lady 110.

ason oday

Tigers have familiar battlecry

IT HAS THE MAKINGS OF THAT HISTORIC run of 2006. There's a rash of injuries and a month-opportunistic that lets squad can overcome adversity and come out on top once again.

"Our team is capable of pulling surprises," said University of the Visayas coach Pido Jarencio, who used that hope-and-a-wish ploy to maximize the per-season for purposes done because of the injuries to key players.

The Tigers were also hit by injuries in the middle of the 2006 season, but scored luck to ride to the second round, before eventually tripping Arenes in the best-of-three finals, a victory that ended a 30-year title drought.

Last season's Most Valuable Player Jerry Cruz has yet to fully recover from a hamstring injury he suffered while playing for Hapee in the PBL, while Dylan Alabanza, who saw action for Harbour Centre, remains out because of a hand injury. Rhadin Mitra, Francis Allers, Mark Cardoz and Allein Maliksi are also nursing minor injuries.

"Our problem is that we are not always complete in practice," he said. "We don't have any ailments because our players in the PBL got injured. They are heavy workers."

That's why Jarencio says needs to quash talk of USC being among the favorites.

"We are not that strong," he said. "We just finished fourth last year." The Tigers spent the preseason travelling and playing tune-up games in Legazpi, Baguio and La Union.

Injuries and all, Jarencio still issued a fearless warning to the rest of the field.

"You know UST, we pick up in the second round," said Jarencio, who stressed that the three Fs: "Pride, Pace, Relation" will remain their battlecry this season. Gold B Rojas

Old mentor fires up Falcons

THERE ARE MANY REASONS why Adamson University is full of hope this season.

Topping the list is the return of Leo Austria, the mentor who steered the Falcons to the Final Four for the first time in 2006.

And immediately, the players have responded to the change as the Falcons pulled off several upsets in their pre-season run.

"There's no impression that we're strong this year," assistant Austria.

"We made an impact because we beat some of the top teams. But on paper, there's little change from our lineup this year. So it's a challenge for us to prove that we're a contender."

Austria, who replaced coach Boge Adornado, signed up with the Falcons in now after a one-year stint with Philcan in the PBL.

And his top concern is at the size balance of the squad that registered only two rebounds last year.

"We have to develop a winning attitude because for a long time, that's the problem of Adamson," said Austria.

Jervis Cabinda, a much improved second-year point guard, is expected to lead the team along with the veteran pair of Raul Gonzalez and Mare Ignacio and rookie guard Alexander Stades. Manning the frontline are junior forward Ray Canoga and new-X-Jam Center Michael Calimag. Jeannine M. Papa

Tamaraws now ing with power

[illegible]."

The Tamaraws also tapped a promising rookie in Robert Kaw, a versatile 6-foot-5 recruit from Papua New Guinea.

"He can play the 3-4-5 (small forward-power forward-center) positions," noted Gregorio. "He has a very good attitude and work ethics. We're not expecting him to score, we want him to defend and rebound more. But he can also shoot from outdoors, so that's a plus."

Also returning for the Tamaraws are big men Bel Cresencio and Mahesh Kumar and dependable guards Andy Mark Barroca, Jon Abiera, Raul Sarga and Marlon Jalalla.

"In our rotation, anyone can step up," said Caperal.

"Almost all the teams have a strong chance of making it to the Final Four. It will boil down to which team will be more consistent and more disciplined." Jeannine M. Papa

Bulldogs: Final 4 hopefuls

FOR COACH MANNY BANDAL, IT'S no longer enough for the National University Bulldogs to be playing the role of spoilers by the time the UNAF season reaches the homestretch.

"I have a lifelong issue," said Bandal, whose team wound up in sixth place last season with a 6-8 record. "Our target is the Final Four."

The Bulldogs, who denied the former Blue Eagles the twice-to-beat incentive in the semifinals with a victory in the last elimination playdate last year, remain formidable, even with the departure of recruit Jeanne Jonathan Fernandez, Cyrus Baligsahin, Michael Sakuda and big man Joseph Lingan-Lingan.

Resident bumper Edwin Bonoy, tough-nosed by his experience with five-time PBL champions Harbour Centre, will be back to anchor the team.

The Bulldogs' rookie class, led by Tadahisa native Glenn Oshida, has also kept Bandal excited. Gold B Rojas

Maroons start rebuilding

IT'S AN INTERESTING TASK FOR new mentor Rhoy Castro to turn the fortunes around of a team that lost all 14 games last season by an average of 20.5 points.

In the Castro, the Jose approach is to change the culture that has characterized the Philippines Marooners' long and downturn goals. The immediate target, of course, is to halt the demoralizing win-less run behind team top scorer Mike Gamboa, forward Woody Co and wingmen Migs de Asis and Martin Reyes.

"This season, we just want to compete and step there towards the end of the game," said Castro, who took over from Jose Lipa. "Who knows, we might keep the game close or snatch a win."

More than half of the roster will suit up anew, including forwards Jay Aghamohammad Mark Lopez and center Magdi Gamo.

"Definitely, there are no real rookies in the team this year," said Castro. "We have players who played in the PBL. The team will rely on their experience."

But no matter the results, Castro insists more focus on the rebuilding program he hopes to accomplish with assistant and all-time PBA great Jerry Codinera. Jeannine M. Papa

MALARAYAT GOLF

Que shoots 66, leads by 1 shot

By Mesang R. Casilio

LIPA CITY—ANGELO QUE IS PREPARING VERY HARD FOR HIS British Open stint—so hard and well, in fact, that he stands to earn a bonus from it.

In near-ideal form, Que yesterday flirted with the course record before settling for a six-under-par 66 that boosted him on top heading into the final round of the $250 Mount Malarayat Championship in the corporate leagues of the sprawling Malarayat golf complex.

"I am just hitting it well, I guess," Que said after posting a 36-hole 203 total that snowed him home-win 4-under at the end of the day. "I had some chances (of setting a new record). I just didn't make the putts. Still, a 66 is not bad."

QUE

That Adoption Professional golfer notched Que's 66 to grab second place just a stroke behind at 204 while compatriot Wise Amposem remained in contention for a second straight Aurora Tour title at 206 after a 71.

Kinetech Aphibarnrat will be the chief Thai presence Que on the final day after he tied the course record of 63 Mars Pesay set in a three-leg second round on Thursday and finished within the shoe of the new leader at 208.

A former amateur ace, Aphibarnrat was tied with Benjie Magada, the tooth cigarette-puffing Filipino veteran, who fired the hidden against a bogey-free at 67.

Que, the first Filipino to secure a slot in the British Open at Royal Birkdale in 10 years, will leave for London on Tuesday hoping to bring with him the game and confidence needed to battle the best in the globe.

Although he bogeyed the 413-yard par-4 12th for the third straight day, Que bounced back by gunning down three of his seven birdies in his last six holes.

"Anyway," Que said when asked if his game is robust he wants it to be for the British Open. "There's still some tinkering to be done."

"I played this tournament to keep my competitive edge. Winning would be a great bonus."

Gunning as much attention as Que was Pesay's 31-shot turnaround. But dropped him from a three-way tie for the lead after 36 holes to eight-under standing.

Pesay's 75 was his worst effort in a total of two tournaments and three rounds of the fledgling Aurora Tour in the Philippines.

The top third round scores (Figures in parentheses denote [illegible]):

[illegible]

SPORTSWATCH

Triumphant RP batters arrive tonight

THE TWO PHILIPPINE SQUADS, COMPOSED OF PLAYERS FROM THE International Little League of Manila, that toted the Asia-Pacific Little League Baseball Championships at the expense of host Saipan "Thursday are scheduled to arrive in Manila tonight.

With the victories, the Boni batters, headed by manager Cathy Tangco-Ong, clinched a spot in this Junior League 13-14 and Senior League 13-15 divisions of the World Series from Aug. 15-24 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Representing the two teams are ILLAM standouts, who joined forces to give the Philippines an unprecedented second-place finish in the Junior League World Series in Taylor, Michigan last year.

The players will arrive at 8:20 tonight via Continental Airlines Flight 886 from Saipan, team official Lotus Lorenzen said. Gold B Rojas

Dolphins take on Bulls, eye semis

CEBU GUNS FOR THE SECOND AND LAST SEMIFINAL BERTH AS IT TAKES on Batangas today in Baseball Philippines' Series 3 of the Final Baseball Stadium.

The Dolphins, the Series 2 champions, are holding on to second place with a 7-3 (win-loss) slate with visitors over the Bulls in their 11 win encounter making them the automatic semis slot.

Manila, runner-up to Cebu in Series 2, took the top seeding and the final semi spot as early as last month behind its spectacular elimination round campaign where the Stanley finished with a 10-1 record.

The Bulls, on the other hand, take a 7-4 (win-loss) record a victory to remain in the hunt for a semis berth.

Liga: Quezon survives Lip comeback

TAGUIG—QUEZON SURVIVED A HARROWING LIPA COMEBACK IN THE closest to perfect, 10-11, in a week 3 game of the Liga Filipinas Town elimination phase here.

The Red Riders controlled the match most of the way, but needed three crucial four thrown by Jose Cardenas in the final 14 seconds to put away the never say die Bombers and notch their second straight win in less than 24 hours.

On Thursday, the Riders turned back the Tagaytay Batang Global, 77-76, to bounce back from a 19-point blowout loss to Sandiel Pamplanga Builders in the Tagaytay leg opener of the nearest regional cage tournament in the country.

In the second game, the Pampanga Builders woke in the 12 fourth quarter points of Neil Mata to subdue the Tagaytay Batang City Global, 83-78.

The win clinched for the Smart-sponsored Builders the top standings in the semifinals of the Tagaytay leg which will be played today after at the 2nd Tagaytay

CFP rejection imperils Torre bid

Gold B Rojas

[illegible]

FUTURE PALARO SITE? Davao del Norte Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario (fourth from right), along with provincial officials, formally present the P226-million astronomers sports complex project in Sen. Pia Cayetano (third from right) and PSC Chairman Willem "Butch" Ramirez (right man) during the recent sit-in drive-by Davao del Norte celebration. The sports complex is expected to be finished before 2010 and will bolster the province's bid to host the Palarong Pambansa.

SPORTS

WIMBLEDON LADIES FINALS

All-Williams showdown

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—THE MOST decorated siblings in professional tennis are back in the Wimbledon final, reviving a rivalry that has been absent from the All England Club since Serena Williams beat older sister Venus in 2003.

"It's definitely been a while," Serena said. "We've been on the same side of the draw a few times. It's good. This is a new start for us."

Venus stretched her Wimbledon semifinal record to 7-0 by beating Elena Dementieva, 6-1, 7-6 (3), Thursday, and Serena joined her on Saturday's final by defeating Zheng Jie, 6-2, 7-6 (3).

"She's tenacious," Venus said of Serena, an eight-time Grand Slam champion. "She's got every shot to master what. You can't bet against her."

Venus has won six major titles, and four of them have come at Wimbledon, including last year against Serena, though Venus is 0-2 in the final at the All England Club and 1-5 overall in Grand Slam finals. Between the two, they have won six of the last eight Wimbledon titles.

Neither has dropped a set through six matches this time.

"I look forward to it," Serena said. "This is Wimbledon. This is a Grand Slam. This is history. We both are trying to make our mark."

On Friday, five-time defending champion Roger Federer is to play former top-ranked players Marat Safin in the men's semifinals, while Rafael Nadal takes on Rainer Schuettler. The winners will play to Sunday's final, and it could be the third year in a row that Federer will face Nadal for the title.

Schuettler advanced to the semifinals Thursday by beating Arnaud Clement 6-3, 3-7, 7-6 (5), 4-7 (7), 8-6 in a match that lasted more than five hours over two days.

The all-Williams final will be the first at any tournament since 2002, when Serena beat Venus in the Wimbledon title match for the second year in a row.

"It's easy, especially with sibling rivalry," said Serena, who has also reached the women's doubles semifinals with her sister. "I personally want everything that Venus has. It's good in this case. We just leave everything on the court. This is for finals of Wimbledon. Who doesn't want it?"

After beating Dementieva, Venus went back on to watch her 26-year-old sister, who cut through rain breaks in both sets before finishing off the 133rd-ranked Zheng.

AP

RP braces for Arenas' 4-day visit

WASHINGTON—GILBERT ARENAS IS accepting his money from the Washington Wizards, breaking an unlikely bid, far removed from the world of his working-class foes.

"What can I do for my family with $127 million that I can't do with $111 million?" he told The Washington Post.

ARENAS

The superscorer, who averaged 25.2 points per game last season, is owed $111 million over six years, considerably less than the maximum deal he said the Wizards offered him when the free agency period began on Tuesday.

Arenas negotiated the deal from China, where is traveling as part of promotional tour for a shoe company, and did so without an agent.

In New Orleans, Chris Paul and the Hornets reached a contract agreement Thursday that would keep the All-Star point guard with the team for at least the next four seasons.

Lance Young, Paul's agent, said Paul agreed to a three-year extension with a player's option for a fourth year. The total value of the deal is $68 million.

Arenas in RP

Meanwhile, Arenas arrives in the Philippines at 9:45 p.m. today for a four-day visit.

During his stay here, Arenas will launch his new signature shoes, visit schools, conduct clinics for children and endorse socially-oriented projects like Ground Kidlings where he will host the summer of a basketball court.

Highlighting Arenas' visit will be his appearance at the Araneta La Salle-Ateneo UAAP tussle(s).

Wushu veteran leads 'Supremacy' battle

EDUARDO POLANCO, A SOMMER Southeast Asian Games gold medalist in wushu, leads a cast of mixed martial arts experts who will throw their wares in the Cob III Universal Reality Combat Championship (URCC) III "Supremacy" starting at 8 p.m. tonight at the S. Maxx Events Hall in Makati City.

The main card features the battle between welterweight champion Felipeng and middleweight champion Cubby Bachacha.

Jimel Kit a lone loss to former URCC champion Alan Cabello but had won by technical knockout over other opponents. His last victim was Patrik Carandang, Cuaro's best fighter, earned him his first and so far only Superfight title.

Polanco, one of the silver medal winners in the 2005 Doha Asiad, stepped up to win the welterweight title.

Felipeng's teammate, Kevin Belingon, meanwhile, will defend his flyweight title against unbeaten Magellan "Hands" Perez in another match.

Belingon dethroned Richard Lagumbay in 2006 and retained the title over Rubilan Cantagnas by arm-bar submission last year.

Bantamweight champion Lito Tagaray and Justin Cruz, a purple belter in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, are also in exciting action.

Tagaray is former national boxer who trained under a Cuban coach, vowed to keep his title.

"I worked hard to be in top shape for my title defense," said Tagaray. "I'll do my best to win."

But Cruz said "I never go into a fight and think that I'm going to lose."

Best Center goes to Thailand

THE MELO-SPONSORED BASKETBALL EXCELLENCE and Rebounding Training (Best) Center has been invited to conduct clinics soon in Thailand, this time at the exclusive Bromsgrove International School, a British-curriculum day and boarding school based in Bangkok.

Mr. Jorge, who founded Best Center 10 years ago, has been the country's pioneering basketball clinicians and recipient of the Philippine Sportswriters Association's Hall of Fame Award, said he is set to finalize talks with Bromsgrove officials before he sends his coaches and instructors to Bangkok before the end of the month.

"The invitation is another proof Filipino basketball coaches are recognized by our neighboring countries," Jorge said. "And we are happy Bromsgrove is also recognizing Best Center's contribution to our youth basketball development."

Meanwhile, Jorge's Best Center classes are set to start today at the Ateneo covered courts in Katipunan, Quezon City. Classes from levels 1-5 will be from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. For inquiries, call 911-6200.

BUSINESS

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BSP says economy to normalize in early '09

Inflation forecast to peak in 3rd quarter

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS YESTERDAY said the Philippines, currently hounded by slowing growth and rising inflation, would spring back to a "normal" business cycle early next year.

As the annual inflation rate broke into a 14-year high of 11.4 percent in June due to surging fuel and food prices, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the global trend of monetary tightening would ease demand-driven consumer price pressures.

"We share the view that current oil and food prices are hardly sustainable, predicting global slowdown and widespread inflation in all countries. Demand pressures will moderate as monetary policy is generally tightened," Tetangco said after the June inflation report was released by the National Statistics Office.

Like other central banks, the BSP tends to tighten monetary policy—whether through an increase in benchmark interest rates, higher reserve requirement on banks or an expansion in the high-yield special deposit accounts—to prevent an inflation-aggravating situation when there is too much money chasing too few goods.

Tetangco has repeatedly signaled the BSP's readiness to further tighten rates, as expected, had risen to double-digit level as a result of the unprecedented jump in world oil prices. Oil based on US futures for the benchmark light, sweet crude is trading at

BSP SAYS /B2

"For the Philippines, we should be back to normal cycle by early next year," the BSP chief said.

"This trend [of high inflation] is expected to peak during this third quarter and to start coming down in the fourth quarter through 2009," he added.

He noted that the economy's inflation rate, as expected, had risen to double-digit level as a result of the unprecedented jump in world oil prices. Oil based on US futures for the benchmark light, sweet crude is trading at

BSP SAYS /B2

Davao, 4 Metro cities named 'most competitive'

By Gaeiry L. Laran

SIX METROPOLITAN AREAS—FOUR of them in Metro Manila—were named the country's most competitive cities for doing business in the annual survey conducted by the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Policy Center.

Named top metropolitan cities in 2007 Philippine Cities Competitiveness Ranking Program (PCCRP) were Davao, Lapu-Lapu, Makati, Manila, Marikina and Quezon City.

They were ranked based on their respective score of doing business; the dynamism of the local economies; human, resource and training; infrastructure; the responsiveness of the local government units to business needs, and the quality of life of their inhabitants.

This year's survey covered 90 cities, 23 of which were cited for their competitiveness in the metropolitan, medium-, and small-sized categories.

The annual survey is a research undertaking of the AIM Policy Center, which

DAVAO /B2

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ERC turns down PSALM demand to collect ₱9B

Regulator stands by decision to use Napocor rates

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMmission has upheld its earlier decision to peg to the National Power Corp.'s (Napocor) new (TOU) rates the wholesale electricity spot market (Wesm) prices during some "questionable" months in 2006, effectively preventing the collection of some ₱9 billion from power users.

In an interview preceding ERC chief Rodolfo Albano Jr.'s said the TOU rates would serve as the benchmark for Wesm's third and fourth billing months instead of the adjusted prices that Philippine Electric Market Corp.—the electricity bourse operator—imposed during that time.

The PEMC-imposed adjusted prices, he said, were higher than Napocor's TOU rates.

"In the particular subject case, the adjustment on the Wesm prices was appropriately made using the ERC-approved Napocor TOU generation rates as 'benchmark,' the same having passed the reasonableness test and have been subjected to the usual public hearing and evaluation by the ERC," he said.

The ERC modified its decision on a motion to the pending demand of the Philippine Investment Alliance for Asians and Liabilities Management Corp., for payment from PEMC of almost ₱9 billion from power buyers in the electricity bourse.

In a letter addressed to PEMC president Lance Hobegalitan late last year, Bonvin said that since the ERC had found PSALM crediting excess treasurer of price manipulation, the government agency was entitled to full payments for power sold in the market from the Aug. 26-Oct. 25 trading months.

"Based on the order of the ERC, it logically follows that the market clearing price for the third billing month was valid and must be effected. Thus, payment of the traded amount based on the market clearing price for the said period is legally and appropriately due to PSALM," the letter said.

"For the same reason, payment for the fourth billing period, though not covered by the investigation, have likewise been adjusted using the administered price," it added.

The ₱9 billion that PSALM wants reportedly is the difference between the actual payments for energy traded in the third and fourth billing months (close to ₱6.7 billion) and the amount due to PSALM based on the market clearing prices (₱13.8 billion), plus the corresponding value-added tax (almost ₱1.2 billion) and interest based on Singapore's interbank lending rate (₱600.4 million).

But even if the ERC had cleared PSALM of price manipulation charges in 2006, it authorized the adjustment of rates for the third and fourth Wesm trading months to match those of Napocor's TOU rates.

Albano said the rates proposed on Napocor's TOU rates would stay.

"They should file a motion for reconsideration. If they feel that we have abused our discretion, then that's the only time they can forward their petition to the [Court of Appeals]," he said.

Manila Water bags $15-M Viet contract

By Arup K. Basu

EAST ZONE CONCESSIONAIRE Manila Water Co. Inc. was awarded a $15-million five-year contract for a performance-based leakage reduction and management services in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Thursday, Manila Water said the project is under the Ho Chi Minh City non-revenue water (NRW) management subproject of the Vietnam Urban Water Supply Development Project.

According to Manila Water, the water supply development project will be funded through a loan from the International Development Agency of the World Bank.

The contract signature was approved by the MWSS People's Committee through its Saigon Water Corp., the disclosure stated.

For this contract, Manila Water formed international group Bluewater Mau Lee Ltd., joint venture of Eastern Water and Universal Utilities and Water and Environment, joint venture of Italian Engineering Richard and Ryle Sap Water, and joint venture of Singapore PUB, LCCE, Hai Asia Water Solutions and Unaware.

Call centers scramble to widen talent pool

By Riza T. Olchondra

FACED WITH INCREASING DEmand for agents, contact centers are now investing in training programs to enlarge the labor supply without sacrificing quality, according to industry players.

One of the first contact centers to venture into the Philippines, eServus Contact Center set up a training academy offering free training to "fun-hires"—applicants who want to be call center agents but need intensive communications training compared with "non-hires" who need minimal training to start working.

"Some graduates or even people who have worked in other call centers may be able to speak English, but that is not enough. What we want are people who have global communication skills, who can understand and interact with people of other cultures without need for a script," company president and CEO Teresa Herrera said in a briefing.

The Contact Center Association of the Philippines (CCAP) said that efforts similar to that of eServus are now being explored to enlarge the talent pool and give fun-hires a chance to work in the industry.

"It is not because we are lowering our standard but we are giving people who cannot readily qualify a chance by giving them training to put them up to the same standard," CCAP executive director Jojo Uligan said.

Herrera added that based on eServus's experience, offering good training promotes loyalty to the company.

The training will be conducted at the Global Communications Management Academy (GCMA) at the 12th floor of the Pacific Star Building in Makati City.

"We believe that GCMA will bring out the best in the Filipinos who have an inherent caring nature and willingness to help people. That is something we cannot train people for. Communication skills, on the other hand, can be taught in this is what we are doing," Herrera said.

APEC@Work training division Joan Reyes said some newly hired need about a month to be "datable" while fun-hires may need another two months or even more. She added that no fees are required from applicants interested to enrolling in their six-week and nine-week training program.

APEC@Work was established in 2002 under a partnership formed between the Performance Consulting Group of the US and Transnational Diversified Group (TDG) of the Philippines.

BSP says economy to normalize in early '09

From page B1

toward highs of about $144 a barrel.

"As a result, domestic pump price increases triggered huge price-buildup across wide communities and sectors groups," Tetangco said.

The Philippines is a net importer of crude oil and is also the world's biggest importer of rice.

The BSP raised its overnight borrowing rate by a quarter-percentage point during its policy meeting in early June—the first monetary tightening in three years. It is widely expected to continue this into its monetary tightening for the rest of the year.

The rates policy rate setting of the BSP's Monetary Board is on July 17.

"The frequency of domestic demand surprises came more for a measured policy response. Favorable conditions arising from a respectable and still solid domestic growth as well as a strong external payments situation imply that the monetary can withstand a measured tightening," according to the minutes of the last Monetary Board meeting to early June.

In Stock and the Pacific, Indonesia, China and Taiwan also raised their benchmark interest rates.

The inflation-targeting BSP forecasts consumer prices to rise by an average of 7-9 percent this year, overshooting its maximum limit of 6 percent. Inflation in May was expected to decline to 4-6 percent against the maximum target of 4.3 percent.

Davao, 4 Metro . . .

From page B1

seeks to identify the best cities in the country to relocate to live, work and operate a business.

In a press briefing, ADB Policy Center director Norberto Manzanilla said the annual survey was an important indicator that helped businessmen determine which cities were "the most dynamic."

He pointed out that cities not judged to be the best in the country may also be the best in terms of investments immediately after.

"One city that was awarded received so much direct investments that they couldn't cope with it," Manzanilla said. "They even had to ask the national government for help."

According to the survey, the best performers edged cities in the country were Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Olongapo, San Pablo, Tagaytay and Tacloban City.

The best small-sized cities, on the other hand, were Bayawan, Calbayog, Calbiga, Dagupan, Digos, Lucena, Malaybalay, Naga, San Fernando, La Union, Surigao, Tagbilaran and Tuguegarao.

Manzanilla said the annual award also has the effect of pushing other cities which participate in the survey to improve their overall competitiveness in search their peers.

"Cities rebuild cities in the competition—they ask up why they lose, and they try to improve on those aspects," he said.

During the briefing, League of Cities of the Philippines secretary general and Calbayog Mayor Mel Senen Sarmiento said the annual rankings also helped local governments improve the running of their cities.

"It measures the sustainability of our programs," he said, adding that even private sector stakeholders in the cities—like the business communities—help ensure that initiatives started by the local government survive even after the mayor's terms ends.

Launched in 1999, the program envisions to promote national competitiveness by encouraging healthy competition among highly urbanized and emerging cities, emphasizing the crucial roles of small and medium enterprises as the backbone of local development.

By gathering and compiling strategic data and providing limited analysis of the results, the PEZA-CEIP also seeks to cultivate competitive industries, promote healthy communities and maximize the economic potentials of the cities.

Currencies

July-1, 2008 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.00000	1.00000	44.7000
Japan	Yen	0.00000	0.00621	0.2775
Europe	Euro	0.00000	1.57000	70.1800
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.00000	0.12821	5.7300
Switzerland	Franc	0.00000	0.98470	44.0100
Canada	Dollar	0.00000	0.98560	44.0500
Singapore	Dollar	0.00000	0.74000	33.0700
Australia	Dollar	0.00000	0.94000	42.0100
Bahrain	Dinar	0.00000	2.65000	118.4500
Kuwait	Dinar	0.00000	3.56000	159.1000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.00000	0.26670	11.9200
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.00000	0.31450	14.0600
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00000	0.00046	0.0200
Thailand	Baht	0.00000	0.03000	1.3400
UAE	Dirham	0.00000	0.27220	12.1700
UK	Pound	0.00000	1.98000	88.5000
China	Yuan	0.00000	0.14600	6.5300
Denmark	Krone	0.00000	0.19710	8.8100
Norway	Krone	0.00000	0.17860	7.9800
Sweden	Krona	0.00000	0.15400	6.8800
Philippines	Peso	0.02240	0.00050	1.0000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.00000	0.76000	33.9800
Vietnam	Dong	0.00000	0.00006	0.0027
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.00000	0.03000	1.3400

ADB may amend lending scheme to fit RP needs

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Kuok Group chair Robert Kuok by the foundation for the Shangri-La at The Fort in Taguig City

Shangri-La breaks ground for $250-M hotel at The Fort

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazcon

SHANGRI-LA ASIA LTD., Asia Pacific's leading luxury hotel firm, is investing $250 million for its sixth hotel in The Fort Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

The hotel is expected to be completed in 2012.

Billionaire Robert Kuok of Malaysian conglomerate the Kuok Group, which owns majority of Shangri-La Asia, said the project would also revolve London-based emerging markets investment firm the Jubaraco Group.

Through its affiliate Archipelago Corp., the Ashdown Group will own 20 percent of the project.

"We are very honored to be given the opportunity to develop a five-star hotel right in the heart of Fort Bonifacio—Manila's busiest growing business and recreation center. This is one of the country's most exciting developments, reflecting the dynamism that is inherent in the Philippine economy today," Kuok said.

In a statement, the company said the hotel would be 66 stories high, with 800 guest rooms and 234 apartments.

The new hotel will complement the company's five existing properties in the Philippines. Its other properties, the Shangri-La's Boracay Resort & Spa, is set to open by the end of 2008.

Shangri-La has joined HLA-based Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLP as architect, and Ritsch Bolton Association to undertake the interior design for guest rooms and the main lobby.

Guest rooms will range in size from 52 square meters for a deluxe room, to 260 sq. m. for the Presidential suite.

The hotel will also feature a total of 4,060 sq. m. of meeting and banquet ing facilities, including a grand ballroom, junior ballroom, 11 function rooms, board room, business center, individual videoconferencing room and a 200-sq. m. outdoor courtyard.

Multilateral agency may let gov't decide which projects to fund

By Michelle V. Rosca

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE Asian Development Bank will hold talks with Philippine government officials to discuss a lending strategy that will effectively boost the country's economic growth.

The meetings will be held from July 15 to 25.

The ADB wants to amend its lending strategy for the Philippines, arguing in with the government's own development efforts, an official from the Department of Finance said.

The source declined to be identified because he is not an official spokesperson for the agency.

Previously, the source said, the ADB was the one that decided what projects and programs should be funded by it loans.

But now, the ADB wanted to revise its lending strategy by making the government decide which programs and projects to fund, according to the government's medium-term development plan for the country.

ADB is the second biggest foreign lender to the Philippines next to the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, according to data from the ADB's website, a total of $9.032 billion has already been lent to the Philippines as of end-2007. The amount covered 199 projects.

The Philippines, in turn, is ADB's fifth largest borrower, accounting for 7 percent of the bank's total loans.

The ADB hopes to make its Country Program Strategy (CPS) for the Philippines effective in helping meet its growth and other macroeconomic targets over the medium term.

The meeting between ADB and government officials will be held at a time when the country is facing several economic problems.

In the first quarter of the year, the Philippine gave by 5.2 percent year-on-year, slowing down from the 7 percent recorded the previous year.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said said the government would spend more on social services this year to ease the burden on poor families.

To be able to spend more, the government should also collect more revenue, he added.

Should tax collection and other nontaxes fall short, the government would have to borrow more from multilateral agencies like the ADB than from commercial sources.

Official development assistance from developmental institutions are cheaper than commercial loans.

TEVES

Teves explained.

The economic slowdown in the first quarter was blamed on rising cost of consumer prices, which has forced households to limit their spending on economic items and businesses to defer investment plans.

Inflation, or the rise in consumer prices, hit 11.4 percent in June, marking its fastest pace in 14 years. This was largely due to unabated increases in global prices of oil.

Analysts said the economic slowdown so far is not the case was also to blame for the worsening unemployment rate in the country. The jobless rate hit 8 percent in April, higher than the 7.4 percent recorded in the same month last year.

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Apex Mining Co. a gold/silver producer located in Misamis Occidental, today reported in its 2008 Stockholders Meeting last June 26 that the gold company has started producing an average output of 500 tons per day. Production will further increase to about 700-1000 tpd as the company further develops its underground tunnels. Official commercial production is planned to start early next year. Copper production appears to be a promising component of the company's complex ore which it intends to explore and develop. Apex has about a thousand regular employees employed from the neighboring communities with more than 200 contract workers of business contractors. This year's Board of Directors are: Messrs. Bill LeChat, Dru Corrineau, Ted Hepworth, Dave Hyatt, Rodolfo Cruz, Bienvenh Dizon, Armando Custodio and Fernando Aguirre.

DA embarks on ₱500-M organic fertilizer project

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRIculture plans to tap local government units (LGUs) in implementing a ₱500-million project to convert vegetable waste from public markets and trading centers in Metro Manila into rich organic fertilizer.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap, Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Director Rodrigo Tejada said Bali because about 30-40 percent of vegetables delivered to Metro Manila's trading centers and public markets end up as waste, "it would be better to put these items into good use by converting them into raw materials for the production of organic fertilizers."

"Using vegetable wastes to produce organic fertilizers is part of the Department's Organikong Magsasaka program, which is part of the DA's programs to help pull down food production costs and promote sustainable agriculture.

According to Tejada, the BSWM would ask LGUs to set up projects in their respective localities to convert vegetable wastes into organic fertilizer.

"There are local technologies that can be tapped to convert vegetable wastes into organic fertilizers, aside from just letting it decompose naturally to produce compost," he added.

One possibility is to go for vermicomposting, or the use of worms to break down vegetable waste into nutrient-rich organic fertilizer.

Agriculture officials have pointed out that the use of organic fertilizers in farm inputs had led to better crop quality and higher yields.

Weaning farmers away from chemical inputs would also help lower farm production costs amid surging prices of petroleum-based fertilizers, which have increased by about 300 percent over the last five years.

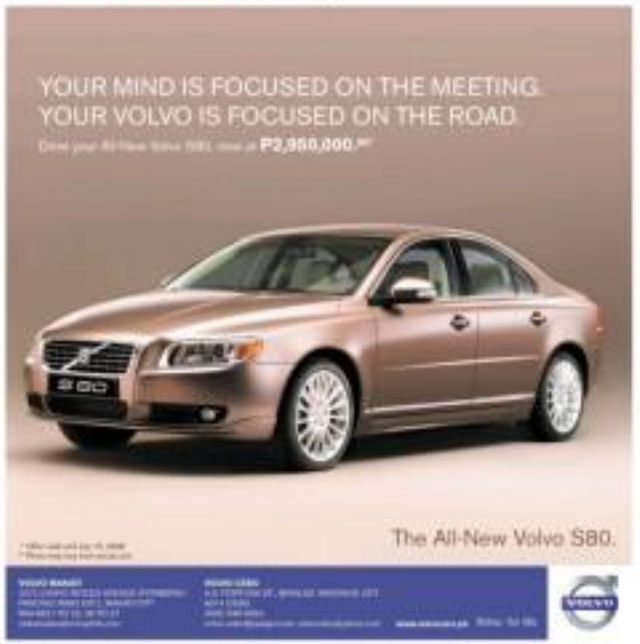
Healthy palay farmers should use at least eight to 10 bags of fertilizers a hectare, each costing about ₱2,500, depending on the kind.

Under "Organikong Pagsasaka," the DA has already introduced Re-Sifted Red Rapid Composting (MRC) technology and use of the right fertilizers in rice-producing regions, according to Tejada.

Blessed festivals in MRC technics-learn farms have already been held in Negros Occidental, Pangasinan, Quezon, Camarines Sur, Bukidnon, Eastern Samar and Ilocos.

Farmers who have participated in the program reported a 20-percent increase in yields, 30- to 40-percent jump in profits and a 50- to 70-percent reduction in expenses for farm inputs, Tejada said.

Tejada noted that other farmers who have applied the MRC technology and used organic fertilizers also reported improvements in soil quality and other water retention of the land.



SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Hangaway

GETTING RID OF FAT

A woman's struggle to lose weight

By Charles E. Rukan

EVEN BEFORE THE ORIENT WOKE and scrutinizing looks Lani Ayala retrieves from people around her, the 28-year-old real estate and property leasing officer from Davao City already knew she really had to take control of her life.

Weighing 132.8 kg (340 lb), she knew she was way beyond the average that her 157 frame should have.

Although her health fair screened five other nonresidents decided to do something to lose weight and shape up.

"Of course I said but then like beach beach, The Zone, and reunion and even played badminton as well as work out in the gym. In the end I just resorted to endless cycle of unhealthy eating habits," she recalled her late weight gain that began when I was in Grade 4, when my parents put me on a diet," Ayala remembered.

Morbidly obese

Ayala is just one of the 600,000 Filipinos diagnosed as morbidly obese, joining the estimated 1.35 million others with similar diagnoses around the world who may develop or succumb to obesity or a disease, by 2015, because of its lifestyle which has recently been classified as a disease in which he has accomplished to the extent that health is impaired. In fact, recently as 1997 the World Health Organization has officially declared obesity as a disease." So, Inc. Inc. Bernard Dr. Bernhard Ernesto Sansone of Julio Sanya Medical Center and the Bilt-red Lap-Band Center, a pioneering institution in the country for effective weight-loss intervention.

40 and above

While obesity has these levels, losing body mass index that divides the patient's weight in kilograms by his or her height in meters squared), those who have a BMI of 30 to 34 are Type 1 Obese while those with a BMI of 35 to 39 are Type 2 Obese. Individuals who have a BMI of 40 and above are severely Type 3, Dr. Sansone explained. Most are fully obese.

However, Sansone disclosed that a WHO report said Asians need not reach a BMI of 35 or 40 before they would start to develop metabolic diseases associated to obesity.

He is Filipino and 20 of Filipinos, based on the food and Research Institute survey, start to become high risk to develop these associated medical problems," Sansone warned.

For patients like Ayala, the solution takes more than dieting, exercises or taking medicines.

More effective

"I was startled as Americans talk about that method dieting but more and more weight-loss options. Of the 11 gastric surgical other procedures that involve stomach stapling, rerouting or cutting of the intestines, I got curious about Lap-Band, which is the safest little or no complications and least invasive of the surgical options available," Ayala continued.

In a recent clinical study, Lap-Band patients can effectively lose as much as 47 percent of their excess weight in two years. Half of the lost subjects underwent a medical program that included a variety of strategies such as a very low-calorie diet (500 calories a day) with liquid meal replacements, prescription weight-loss medications and behavior therapies had regained much of their lost weight at the end of the 2-year study.

The other half who had the Lap-Band were able to keep the lost weight off.

Pioneered

With these information Ayala searched for Sansone who pioneered the procedure here in the country (the Bilt and Lap-Band Center is located at the 21st floor of the Medical Plaza Makati at the corner of Ayala-de and Sen. Gil Puyat avenue).

BEFORE AND AFTER: Ayala lost so much weight a year after undergoing the Lap-Band surgery under specialist Sansone.

Dr. La Rosa (center).

Sansone remembered that before Ayala underwent Lap-Band surgery in January 2007, she went through a series of medical examinations such as chest x-rays, psychological assessments and heart exams under cardiologist Dr. Jose Pepito to ensure that she was prepared for the surgery.

After her surgery, Ayala averaged a weight loss of 1 kg a week or 3.6 kg to 4.5 kg a month. A year after she shrunked to just 80 kg or 112 lb (she continues to lose more, she added).

"What made her surgery successful was that she was a good patient following the required diet of liquids and broth during the first month, then slowly incorporating solids like soft vegetables, chicken and fish in the following months; coming regularly for her Lap-Band adjustment schedules as well as follow-ups with me and her nutritionist," Sansone explained.

A fresh, new perspective on the gender debate

CARSPLUS

Angelo Palmones

MALE OR FEMALE...WHICH is the stronger sex? This debate has been raging since a lady named Eve plunked the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge to make a bite and offered it to a guy named Adam. At least that's how the popular story goes, which some describe as fiction with a touch of chauvinism. After tons of human existence, the gender argument is no exactly and bound as ever.

To put the question in a scientific—and probably more objective—perspective, we asked a respected cardiologist about his professional opinion on the matter.

Physically stronger

"Generally men are physically stronger than women," says Dr. Antonio C. Sibulo Jr., director of the St. Luke's Heart Institute, "but not necessarily stronger emotionally."

The male skeleton is larger which gives men an inherent edge in strength whereas menopause contributes to an abrupt loss in bone density in women, explains Dr. Sibulo, who is also past president of the Philippine Heart Association and Asian Federation of Cardiology. Thanks to their higher testosterone level, men generally have bigger muscles than women. Hence, men are three times more likely than men to develop thyroid disorders and rheumatoid arthritis, an inflammatory disease that attacks the lining of the joints.

Dramatically, a degenerative joint disease caused by the daily wear and tear of living, develops twice more frequently in women's hands and four times more frequently in their knees. That's because men have larger bones capable of withstanding physical stress better.

Longevity

While men can gloat over their superiority in physical strength, women can boast of having a huge—perhaps the ultimate—advantage: "Men are twice more likely to be dead by age 45 and three times more likely to die before age 7," Dr. Sibulo says. "On average, women outlive men by 7 years. During infancy and childhood, boys die more frequently than girls. Thirty percent more men than women die between the ages of 20 and 24. So thanks to testosterone, more men than women are successful in heart disease and cancer or die due to accidents, suicide and murder."

According to Dr. Sibulo, the key to women's edge in longevity appears to be their higher levels of estrogen, the stench hormone that the hormone is behind the lower incidence of colorectal cancer and heart disease in women. "In most women, heart disease occurs after menopause when estrogen levels naturally decline," the cardiologist explains. "As a result, women generally develop heart disease 10 years later than men do."

Dr. Sibulo based his statement on data from the St. Luke's Heart Institute-Cardiovascular Disease Information System, a unique, computerized, patient database aimed at improving cardiovascular care. The CVDIS revealed that the average age of male patients who suffered a heart attack and/or had heart surgery was 59 compared to 63 for female patients. While men suffered a heart attack three times more frequently, women tended to have more concurring medical conditions prematurely, Dr. Sibulo said. Women who had they suffered a heart attack at a later age.

Lifestyle changes

From a biological standpoint, it is clear which gender has the edge. Dr. Sibulo recommends the following lifestyle changes to help men compensate for their innate biologic disadvantage:

- Quit smoking and drink moderately.
- Check blood pressure regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet and maintain an optimal weight.
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- For men 40 years old and above, undergo a prostate exam.
- Find less stressful, otherwise manage stress well.

Dr. Sibulo also offered his personal opinion on the gender debate by quoting age old wisdom from a lady named Simone de Beauvoir. In 1931, the French author and philosopher wrote, "People have classified women by sex so that the woman is regarded inferior or equal to man. If we are to gain understanding, we must...discard the vague notions of superiority involving equality which have hitherto corrupted every discussion of the subject and start afresh."

• • •

Angelo Palmones is a science and technology broadcaster. For feedback, please e-mail the Healthcare Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau at cnquiry@hotmail.com.

Foods that hit high nutritional notes

WASHINGTON—IMAGINE A DRUG THAT could subside your waistline, control your blood pressure, protect your heart, strengthen your bones, cut the risk of stroke and possibly help you live many more years of active, healthful life. Sounds too good to be true, right?

It would be hard to beat, wouldn't it?

There's no pill with these benefits, but there are foods that hit those high nutritional notes. I'm talking, of course, about fruits and vegetables.

Scientists are just beginning to fully understand the powers of produce, but the start of summer presents a great opportunity to expand your nutritional horizons by sampling the fruits and vegetables that peak now and in coming months.

Common-sense advice

Eating more fruits and vegetables is the kind of common-sense advice that mothers have doled out for generations. Now, 21st century scientists are beginning to list how richly fruits and vegetables provide so many health benefits.

It has to do with an array of essential vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients—plant-based substances with fungus-resisting names such as anthocyanins and lycopene. That's the savory and sweet good stuff. Just know that they're good for you and are found in pink and red produce, including pomegranates, red cabbage, cherries, red peppers, watermelon and red grapes. They support the immune system and some cancers, including prostate cancers.

That's just for starters.

Green products, from avocado, pears and limes to okra, green beans and zucchini, are rich in carotenoids that can enhance eyesight, help preserve vision by preserving the retina and gobble up free radicals to help thwart cancer and aging.

Yellow- and orange-hued fruits and veg stables are rich in beta-carotene—which is converted by the body to vitamin A. It boosts immunity and protects vision. Count apricots, bananas, papayas, peaches, carrots and tomatoes as squash among this group, which also packs other nutrients. Pineapple, for example, has bromelain, an enzyme that aids in digestion and reduces bloating.

White vegetables and fruits—from jicama to lychee nuts—contain allicin, which helps control blood pressure and cholesterol and may bolster immunity.

Superstars

But the superstars seem to be cruciferous vegetables: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower as well as arugula, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, rutabaga, turnips, bok choy, bonus radish, wasabi and watercress.

These vegetables contain potent substances that seem to prevent cancer cells and may have antimicrobial activity. In April, scientists reported that substances extracted from broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables thwarted the bacteria that cause most ulcers as well as 21 and 28 other germs, microbes and fungi—at least in the lab tubes. There's also evidence that eating cruciferous vegetables may help counteract the suspected cancer-causing chemicals that occur in grilled food.

Health survey fills in the blanks

By Rahel B. Carrillo

DR. JANCIE MORALES, WHO WAS recently awarded as a "Most Outstanding Scientist" by the Philippine Heart Association, is doing a part 2 of his search landmark research projects...the National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHeS) 2003-2004.

The first NNHeS was conducted to help "help fill in the blanks of many vital information which are lacked in the past. It determined the national prevalence of 36 diseases and risk factors which impact strongly on the Filipino's health. It produced separate reports on these diseases/risk factors which mean narrowing of the blood vessels (coronary heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease) and five risk factors (hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia, obesity and smoking).

Access to necessary care

Because of it, local health experts now have access to necessary statistics, especially the prevalence and clinical presentation of these common medical problems and risk factors such as heart attack, enlarged heart, irregular heartbeat or arrhythmia, hungover syndrome, diseases of blood vessels in the lungs (pulmonary arterial hypertension), kidney disease, kidney stones, high-uric acid, abnormal urine with blood, pus cells and protein, dementia (senility), migraine, Parkinson's disease, varicose and bone diseases, asthma, food allergies and several others.

The NNHeS 2003-2004 was conducted through a multistage national effort, with the support of various government agencies coming from 14 medical specialty associations, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST).

The well-organized research team doing the nationwide survey really went down up to the barangay level, from which the representative households were randomly chosen. Households totaling 2,500 were sampled from 17 regions and 79 provinces. The survey covered all the members of the randomly selected households consisting of 2,733 children aged 0-12 years old and 4,731 adults aged 20 years and over.

The researchers did face-to-face interviews using validated structured questionnaires, followed by measurements of height, weight, waist circumference, per se in circumference, skinfold thickness and percent body fat. Blood tests and urine analysis were also done.

Prevalence

Based on the survey results, the five risk factors have these estimated prevalence: 34 percent for smoking, 8 percent for high cholesterol, 4.6 percent for diabetes, 3 percent for obesity and 17.6 percent for hypertension.

These atherosclerotic diseases have the following prevalence: 1.5-5 percent for coronary heart disease, 1.4 percent for stroke and 1.6 percent for peripheral arterial disease.

According to Dr. Morales, the NNHeS data provide valuable information that will help formulate appropriate intervention programs such as lifestyle modification, nutrition labeling and healthy diet campaigns. "This is important in the general and specific prevention of cardiovascular-related lifestyle risk factors and diseases," says Dr. Morales, who is also the medical director of the Manila Doctors' Hospital.

Encouraged by the meaningful success of the first NNHeS, Dr. Morales and his team are embarking on the follow-up NNHeS project called "Philippines Health Survey Component of SEAHeS (1998)." This survey will look up the prevalence of many of the conditions done in 2003 and in addition, determine the prevalence of abnormal bone functions through a special examination (2D-echocardiography), abdominal aneurysm, liver enzyme abnormality, thyroid problems and others.

Big problem

Being another ambitious research project, raising the needed funds is quite a big problem. The Department of Health, the Food and Nutrition Institute of the Department of Science and Technology and medical organizations which realize the value of the project have all generously contributed, but the funds are still not enough.

"This is a mammoth undertaking for which we have the professional and technical capability but lack financial resources," Dr. Morales says.

The steering and technical committee of this project have organized a gathering of key officers of the participating medical organizations, friends and other supporters to disseminate the 2003 data and present the details of the 2008 plans. Executives from the pharmaceutical industry have also been invited to get inputs from them on other survey items which they can use in their business, such as in planning the product portfolio of their respective companies or their strategic directions based on disease prevalence of various diseases in the country. Contributions from these to support the project will also be most welcome.

The event is slated on July 26, Saturday, 13 a.m. at the San Lazaro Leisure Park. Interested parties may call or text (0917) 8999887 for reservations in the meeting.

This is one research project which deserves the support of everyone. "But undertaking is an excellent example of a successful partnership between the government and the private sector," Dr. Morales says.

MEDICAL FILES

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Mangosing

RP properties 'hottest' in Southeast Asia

By Tessa R. Salazar

WE MAY HAVE HOT weather and hot-headed drivers, and "hot" money pocketed by some corrupt government officials, making life a little bit more difficult here in the Philippines. But looking at the brighter side, see "hot" been may bring back the word "pearl" to Asia's sprawling Pearl of the Orient.

The Philippines was recently declared as a popular real estate hub in Southeast Asia by international commercial real estate services firm CB Richard Ellis Philippines.

It further cited that "investment opportunities in tourism, infrastructure, mining and real estate remain high" here.

In its July 2 news release sent to Inquirer Property, CBRE Philippines general manager Tom Frankum even raved the superlative "hottest" in his description of how foreign investors took up properties in the Philippines. He enumerated the positive effects of the stable Philippine peso, increasing tourist arrivals, the BPO boom, and the influx of overseas Filipino workers' dollar remittances on the property market.

Frankum's declaration was based in the recently held SMART Investment and International Property Expo at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre June 21 and 22.

Not yet overpriced

In a recent phone interview with the Inquirer, Property Joey Rañeses, vice chair of CBRE Philippines, said the reason for the country's popularity among property investors was that "we're not yet overpriced, we're still cheap." He cited, for instance, that Singapore is three to four times more expensive than Manila.

Rañeses, who also heads the global corporate services, said the developers are seriously looking at the European and Middle East markets.

Rañeses singled out business process outsourcing, tourism and OFW money as major drivers putting the Philippines in the map of Southeast Asia's most sought-after investment locations.

Colliers

"Broadly agree" was the term used by Colliers International Philippines' managing director David A. Young, when asked to react on CBRE Philippines statement that the country is the "hottest" real estate hub in Southeast Asia.

Said Young: "The Philippines' real estate market is attracting unprecedented levels of investor from investors, most visibly in hospitality and

SEE B2.2

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Conversion not enough to impact rice production

By Charles E. Bulan

THE PHILIPPINES HAS A TOTAL land area of 30 million hectares, of which 15 million are devoted to agriculture. Good grains like corn and rice, food crops like coconut and sugarcane, and nonfood crops like tobacco, rubber and cotton are cultivated.

Also, the staple food for 90 percent of Filipinos, generally our 3.31 million hectares.

It will be recalled that a few months back, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued a directive to the Department of Agrarian Reform suspended for two years the processing and approval of all land conversion applications for rice lands to the end of limited shallow areas to encourage, purportedly because of declining farm lands due to conversion into residential subdivisions, golf courses, tourism and other uses.

So used to seeing

"Perhaps people have been so used to seeing agricultural lands located around the most urban and high population density areas being converted into subdivisions that a lot of people thought a huge portion of the country's agricultural land is being lost to housing developments," said Subdivision and Housing Developers Association national president Pedro Aliman.

This is not true according to Aliman who explained that records would show that since 1975, only about 40,000 hectares were converted to housing, commercial and industrial use.

"This is equivalent to just one third of one percent of the 15 million hectares of agricultural lands of the country," he reported. "This fact, alone indicates that lands converted for housing, or even for commercial and industrial uses hardly had any bearing on the overall rice production standing of our country."

Surpass

Mr. Alfonso Properties and Development Corp. Chair Ramon Alfonso agreed adding that while the country's population explosion is put on hold, the number of families with no decent shelter will increase in number from between 200,000 and 600,000 a year, surpassing the 3 million mark.

"It's sad because right now, we still have a backlog of 3.9 million housing units, and is expected to further grow to 5.1 million within 20 years," Alfonso said.

He believes a review of the statistics is needed and that the developer's inputs should also be considered.

Capacity to address

"Developers in the small and medium scale category provide the maximum number of housing units per project. Since the price is within the reach of most Filipino families, we have the capacity to address the housing backlog at a much shorter time," said Alfonso, citing examples of his projects, Lessandra mansions Executive Homes in Calamba, which offers 1,000 units and St. Joseph Village 3-6 in San Pedro, whose three phases total 2,700 units.

He added that the Laguna, where a huge portion of its projects are located, a huge part of the land is still devoted to agriculture and developers like Mr. Alfonso are careful in selecting areas for development.

"We only need to consider a balance between ample food supply and addressing the housing needs. Besides the national housing agencies and offices, including the local authorities have more than enough laws and regulations to properly govern the land conversion," Alfonso said.

HIGH-RISE developments like St. Joseph 1 to 6 in San Pedro, Laguna offer more affordable priced units.

PR. Emmanuel Sarza is thankful that Termidor helped rid the church grounds of termites.

Termite attacks at Santa Maria della Strada Parish

ONE OF THE MOST TERRIBLE CREATURES existing in the planet, no doubt, is the termite. With teamwork, termite colonies can rapidly feed on and destroy houses, schools, offices and even places of worship, blending in survival to these pesky termites.

The wood-eaters have transformed construction buildings into hollow and dangerous traps, whether they're homes, campuses or churches. These attacks have resulted in very expensive repairs. But one particular parish in a suburban area was spared all that.

The continuously flat slopes at the Santa Maria della Strada Parish has always been different, united in one common belief. From all walks of life, they continue to gather in this sanctuary, located at Sampaguita Pursad in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The parish's structural and ethical vigor decades ago, a special and historic place for meditation and celebration.

Timely action

The church symbolizes devotion and strength, but there came a time when it was threatened by invasive and seemingly unstoppable termites. Thanks to the timely action of a private service that looked after its interior and exterior, the church was saved from the destructive pests.

Gloria "Nelsi" Dee's a parish administrator, and a layperson devoted to the church, which dealt with the garden-based infestations. But last year, the property was surveyed and a swarm of Philippine kills termites were discovered. The infestations and damages necessitated to be dealt with, requiring the expertise of a licensed and professional pest control operator.

Effective

Spotless Pest Services Inc., a qualified and accredited operator, introduced the safe and scientifically proven treatment" Colony Elimination System, manufactured by Dow AgroSciences. Trained technicians drew strategically placed Termidor's bait stations in the assessments and the church perimeter.

"We could see many termite residents before. They crawled soon after installation," Dee explained. "It's effective; the termites' many people report that their area's termite mud tunnels in the area anymore. The attacks lessened significantly after the installation of Termidor."

Spotless's analyses and reports are easy to understand and its technicians continue to keep them informed of developments, according to Dee. "They visit regularly and on call basis. When they say they're going to inspect, they arrive as scheduled.

Termidor™ colony elimination system, unlike traditional technicides, has no properties harmful to humans, and does not require massive ground drillings or digging. Odorless and diminishingly effective, Termidor affects termites to its baiting tubes and terminates entire colonies.

Aside from the church building, two other structures in the property were spared from a costly and terrible fate: the Lindeo Center (a multipurpose building that has offices, dorms and recollection rooms) and the Lingkod Center (a building that houses the 8 family clinics and activity rooms).

Threefold

Parish priest Fr. Emmanuel Sarza is thankful that this preventive measure has kept the termite invasion away. "I really didn't notice them because I was preoccupied and attending to other things in the parish," he said. "But I guess with Baha it's a much safer place; I think it's a big thing to be able to save the parish from damage caused by termites. That would have been something that's very hard to repair and disrupt regular activities," he added.

Termidor was a cost-saving measure."

Oil price hikes boost transit-oriented Manhattan Garden City in Cubao

THE CONTINUED RISE IN GAS prices has prompted many individuals and families to reconsider their priorities in terms of spending. PhP5 oil price hiking raises this US$139 per barrel and threatening to increase to six more in 2008, many and many Filipinos are reluctant to invest in their own vehicles and choose instead to commute or invest in properties near their area of work.

Megaworld Central Properties Inc. President Anthony Chanbonpin Sy has noticed the rise in transit-oriented property purchases during the past months as a consequence of the oil price hikes. This is especially true of Megaworld's Manhattan Garden City, the Philippines' first ever garden-inspired, transit-oriented community.

"Due to the continuous oil price hikes and the ensuing rise in the price of commodities, consumers are beginning to evaluate their spending and looking for ways to minimize everyday costs. They realize that they can't afford to have car payments and gasoline, and rather consider to live close to their place of work or business. One can now live their place of work or school," Fu said.

Retail and lifestyle hub

Manhattan Garden City is a retail and lifestyle hub that comprises residential towers that are interconnected via the SMET and SMEZ Skywalk at 7.29 metres elevated garden walkway. The Manhattan Garden City towers will have a hotel style, centralized grand traveler pavilion and lobby through which all residents and visitors will pass. 24 hours a day. It provides the residents with flawless easy access to the property's commercial spaces, while providing a private space that is akin to a vacation home in the suburbs.

This resort-oriented lifestyle is perfected after the success of fine-

1149 hotel-style lobby and grand traveler pavilion connects Manhattan Garden City residents to the many amenities of the entire Araneta Center and the whole metro via the MRT and EDSA.

Fitness at 7,001 Garden City's hedge against rising oil prices.

world cities such as New York, Singapore and Hong Kong. The strategy puts a premium on accessibility.

Perfect location

"At Manhattan Garden City, we hope to enrich the lives of residents by removing their worries as even increasing gas prices, long travel time and the threat of pollution. We have combined the perfect location with amazing connectivity and a lush landscape to bring the ultimate in resort city living to our residents," Fu promised.

To make a lifetime of savings from rising gas prices, choose to live in the transit-oriented residential haven of Manhattan Garden City Please check out the showroom at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall.

'RP properties hottest . . .

From page B3-1

"We expect 18,141 units to be provided from 28 upcoming condominium projects in Makati that are targeted for completion between 2008 and 2013. Likewise in Bonifacio Global City, 11,852 units are expected to come on the market from 23 residential condominiums being constructed from 2008 to 2012," Hernandez said.

Meanwhile, the offshoring and outsourcing (BMO) boom in the Philippines has created new opportunities for the real estate market, it has also attracted "major investors and franchisees are realizing as the Philippines because it is one of the largest English-speaking markets in the world and has 33.5-million Filipinos in the 'work force,'" he noted.

A chance to cook in style

Moving into a new home is always exciting but never more so than when you are doing it for the first time. Your first real estate investment will definitely change your life, and you will want to reflect your own character in everything that you do in your new home.

The kitchen is that area of the house where one can showcase his own character. From concentrating the kitchen as the center of the abode.

More than a place for cooking, the kitchen is now the heart of family life where members of the family gather to enjoy food and their leisure, where intimate issues are discussed and shared, although a kitchen would always function as long as it has the basics like a stove, a sink, and working area, these days, a kitchen combines more gadgets attained to one's taste and lifestyle. It wouldn't be surprising for first time home builders to find out that along with the bathroom, the kitchen is also high in terms of cost per square meter. Nowadays, to add glamour to the kitchen, the counter top alone is one of the most expensive fixture inside a home.

Enjoy the high life and fill your home with Metrobank Metrohome High Life High Five promo complete kitchen bundle prize that includes in terms of cooking appliances, a washing machine, a La Germania cooking range, a sharp microwave oven, a Black & Decker bread toaster, a Kenpo espresso maker, and a Maxim's food processor. Aside from the complete kitchen bundle, you also have the opportunity to win other prizes such as Digital Plumbs which includes an Epson PX3D Series and Canon digital camera, the Techno Savvy Bundle which comes with a Sony VAIO laptop, an Olympus underwater camera, and an Apple iPOD Nano, the Fine Furniture Bundle is a furniture showcase from Abrea and the Family Entertainment Bundle is made up of a Mitsubishi WD a Philips 42" LCD TV, and a Philips Home Theater System. This prizes is open to borrowers whose application for a Metrohome loan is accepted from May 2 to July 31, 2008 and approved for at least P 1,000,000 for a minimum term of five (5) years. Only borrowers whose approved Metrohome loans are booked or availed of no later than September 30, 2008 are eligible for a chance to win any of the exciting lifestyle prize bundles including the chance to complete your own dream kitchen package!

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WHAT CRITERIA DO YOU CONSIDER when choosing a site for a building project? Prime location? Good price? Clean, well-manicured surroundings?

Have you ever considered a brownfield for your project? You may not realize it but perhaps your project is being built on a brownfield.

What is a brownfield? A brownfield is an abandoned, underused industrial or commercial site, where development is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. These sites could be redeveloped as mixed housing and commercial projects, or community gardens and orchards, and many other land uses.

Damaged sites

Brownfields can exist that have been damaged by previous building or industrial activities. These sites may require extensive remediation to remove toxins, such as lead, asbestos, gasoline, diesel, motor oil, pesticides and a host of other environmental contaminants.

The contaminants may be found in the soil, underwater and sludges (accumulation of dirty silt). They may also be found in groundwater, surface water and leachate (liquid runoff from dumps seeping surrounding groundwater).

Damage may also be caused by chronic bad drainage or disorder of overgrazing by livestock.

There are some of the challenges that contaminated brownfields pose for would-be developers, investors and designers because of their potentially harmful effects.

Challenge

Reusing and rehabilitating damaged land instead of developing virgin land is a sustainable practice. It reduces pressure on undeveloped land resources.

The development of brownfield candidates for housing by developed countries has also prompted this strategy and reuse of brownfields.

In almost all countries there are many cases of prime development areas like downtown cities, industrial waterfronts, abandoned warehouses, and areas close to public transportation and inner-city core subway. These areas could be redeveloped into mixed housing and commercial projects, or economically positive and outlooks, and many other land uses.

What can be done?

Potential brownfield developers must first consider realizable for their advantages and liabilities, and assess the extent of environmental cleanup work needed to make the site feasible for future users. The amount of cleanup will depend on the level of risk.

Architects play an important role at the start of a construction project. They have the planning, facilitation and coordination skills to see the big picture.

Planning process

The first step in the brownfield process is visual inspection of the current site of the land and is made of its past uses, the neighborhood and infrastructure. If the findings show signs of possible toxic materials in the land like lead, arsenic or asbestos, the process becomes more intensive. Sampling of the soil, air, groundwater, ground water and/or sediment is made to determine the type and quantity of contaminants.

A work plan is then made on how the site will be cleaned up for the intended use (a polluted forest, residential) prescribed by the Environmental Protection Agency or EPA are followed, and once the work plan is approved, the developer may avail of tax credits, loans or grants. The cleanup of a particular site can be performed if the land level. Then owners of brownfields may not be liable for contaminants created by the past, but they have to comply with certain requirements prescribed by law.

Remediation techniques

There are several ways to apply remediation techniques in a contaminated brownfield depending on the type and location of the contaminants.

Remediation techniques include removal of contaminants from the site, others are treated on site, while others are contained on-site to act to spread.

In the case of diesel-contaminated soil, some of this diesel soil is excavated and aerated so that volatile hydrocarbons will be released before the soil is removed from the site. The remaining soil is covered with uncontaminated clean fill.

An area with heavy-metal contamination may be designated for use for parking.

Remedies for types of contamination found at typical brownfield sites are now the subject of a new field of engineering called environmental engineering. New technologies is targeted to sample, analyze and clean up environmentally contaminated areas.

Our country is going through rapid urbanization and the need for more legislation on environmental protection is upon us.

Brownfield redevelopment is very much a part of the effort to reduce our ecological footprint, which is the impact of human society on the land and its finite resources. The aim is to improve standards of living in a public safety and health.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amado.dejesus@gmail.com.

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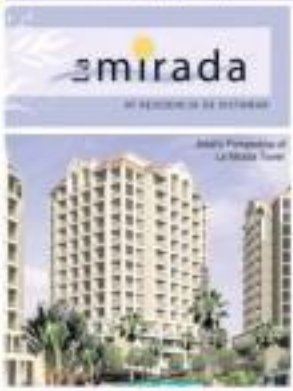

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With the sold out success of the now fully operational hotel/condo-hotel complex La Mirada, the second of five towers in Residencia de Mactan.

Located at Cebu's most prime tourist destination, Mactan Island, La Mirada offers luxury and comfort in the world-class resort surroundings.

SEAFDEA

PHILIPPINE AMERICAN LIFE & GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY

Manhattan Garden City offers super-charged amenities

As urban denizens become more discriminating in their choice of homes, the race for the property with the best and super-charged amenities commences. Architects, engineers and landscapers of leading real estate developer Megaworld Corporation rise to the challenge with Manhattan Garden City (MGC). The garden-inspired development boasts of open spaces and manicured gardens and tranquil parks filled with tropical plants that serve as screens and buffers for privacy.

For the urban commuter, MGC also has thoughtful additions. All of MGC's residential towers are interconnected to the MRT and LRT2 through a 720-meter elevated garden walkway. Get to that oriental meeting in time simply by walking a few paces to the train terminals. The towers will have a hotel-style, centralized transfer pavilion and lobby ensuring safety and security.

Completing the innovative list of amenities is each family member. MGC created places of leisure, whether active or passive, within the property. Active bodies and athletes-to-be will love the basketball court with bleachers, 25-meter lap pool with a bubble pool and an indoor game room for adults and kids. A business center and function room will also serve the needs of the busy executives within the area.

To foster a calm and relaxed lifestyle, passive activities such as yoga, meditation or simply reading books can be done at the sitting area, garden plazas, and fountains. Its verdant landscapes are ideal for a little quiet time, or a bonding session with the whole family.

Water babies and spa aficionados will love the outdoor spa, shallow water footbath and enclosed sun deck at Tower 3 (the Megawonder), as strive to give our buyers the best for fulfilling their needs. We wish to give them the most complete amenities, so that all of their activities will be confined within MGC. It's definitely a super way to live here at MGC," said Megaworld Central Properties Inc. President Anthony Charlemagne Yu.

Find out more by visiting the Manhattan Garden City showroom conveniently located at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall. You may also call 810-3333 or email inquire@themanhattangarden.com to make a viewing appointment.

Formidable Camp John Hay Partnership Born. In a monumental signing ceremony held last Tuesday, July 1, 2008, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, Subic-spun-off CJH Development Corporation and business giant Ayala Land, Inc. sealed a formidable partnership expected to catapult Camp John Hay as the premier eco-tourism and business destination north of Manila.

In the picture (left to right): CJH Director Rafael Perez de Tagle, Jr., CJH President Ferdinand T. Santos, ALI EVP Vincent Tan, ALI President James Ayala, CJH Chairman/CEO Robert John L. Sobrepeña, BCDA President/CEO Marvin L. Abaya, BCDA Chairman Aloysius B. Santos, BCDA Director Jorge Banal and BCDA Director Nena Valencia

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*See flyers for more details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3206 Series of 2008.

NOVA Romania, one of the prime communities of Camella North, is an 18-hectare residential enclave that features Mediterranean-inspired homes.

Camella North energizing Caloocan like never before

WITH MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF building experience and pioneering leadership, Camella has established itself as the Philippines' most favored housing development brand. No doubt, it has helped a legacy of providing Filipino families with cost-efficient yet high quality home choices to thriving communities.

Designed to embody practical and modern living standards, Camella has provided affordability, friendly and responsive environments for thousands as well as generations of families to fully enjoy the hope and zeal of traditional home and community living.

Camella has gained leadership in the biggest property developer in the country by introducing the first themed, master-planned community in the Philippines during the '70s and with new technology and design innovations, it has continued to build better and more captivating communities in the same pioneering tradition.

In terms of themed communities, aspirer homes and trendy condominiums – from mid-rise to high-rise developments – it sets the excellent benchmark that Camella has set for itself, fulfilling the most demanding needs of their homebuyers at a price they can easily afford.

Setting the trend

A member of the largest homebuilder in the Philippines, Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc., Camella has developed extensive communities within Metro Manila and 14 other key cities in the country. Camella North has developed communities in Norzagaray, Caloocan – Nova Romania, Alienza, Camella Vita, El Pueblo and Sienna Villas; in Sjoma, Bifiondo, La Mesa Eco Park; and in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan – Sierra del Monte and Greenleaf.

Last month, Camella North in Caloocan unsecorded its residential portfolio by expanding its current portfolio to include "Ready Homes" in Alienza and the now more affordable "Starter Home Series" in Nova Romania with the introduction of Arturo, Alora and Alora cluster townhomes, the affordable selfless-in-Seaford Seville and Riverbeds communities.

In full swing

"The Ready Homes series concept are for homebuyers who have already set their minds to owning homes that satisfy both aesthetics and function," says Christine Caron, Camella North operations head.

These 2-story quality homes had been built and are ready for occupancy. With the easy no-hassle and quick "loan ease" feature of Camella's Ready Homes package, there's virtually zero waiting time for them. Personal homebuyers can readily check and move in the next day," she adds.

Camella Alienza in Nova Romania sees of five home units already built as specifications with carport and front lot added convenience, are ready for occupancy. Camella North's simplified and straightforward payment scheme complements the convenience and expediency inherent in the "Ready Homes" series concept, proving that the legacy of Camella is truly "Home Is Everything as Camella" is not an empty promise. Camella North aims to make the dream of owning a home for thousands of Filipino families a everything reality.

Within the developed Camella Nova Romania, a compendium of new home communities started to take center stage. Arturo, Alora and Alora was launched last month alongside Seville and Riverbeds communities, which will be available-for-occupancy in 2008. These five communities will comprise the new wave of Camella's affordable homes for starting families.

Best home option

Hailed as Camella's most practical solution to the country's urgent need to provide quality, affordable housing, the "Starter Home Series" are 2-story homes built using the efficiencies of innovative space planning design and quality materials selected—all from Vista Camella's 32-year experience in home building.

The base 18,000 square meter amortization is really affordable. A Starter Home Series house and lot package only requires a 10 percent deposit with flexible loan and financing packages available to suit every homebuyer's budget.

Compare that to the cost of current month's rental spaces with the same area and location that require at least 3 months deposit and 2 months advance rental and you get the picture why Camella's Starter Home Series is the best home option for many families.

The real value better extends beyond the sizes of home ownership. Arturo, Alora and Alora communities are cluster communities within the already built Nova Romania—an 18-hectare prime residential Camella community with amenities that include a gated security entrance, perimeter fence, a new clubhouse, swimming pool, gardens, playgrounds and parks ideal for family gatherings and for community activities.

super LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
Subeditor/Layout Pam Pastor

Family Sunday Brunch

Take a culinary journey as you go buffet hopping from one restaurant to another to savor the best dishes offered at Basil, Benjarong, Trysa and Umu from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for only Php1,400 nett per person.

Children 6 to 12 years old availing of the brunch will only pay half the price and will be treated to an afternoon of fun and games at the Ballroom.

For inquiries, please call 887-3555

Dusit Thani

The never-alone generation

Hearing people my age complain about loneliness is ludicrous

By Pam Pastor

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO remember the last time I was truly alone.

Sure, I was alone in my hotel room in Singapore two weeks ago, away from family and friends, but my laptop was constantly plugged in and new pages kept popping up on my Yahoo Messenger.

My phone, even if it stopped sending text messages twice, never lost its signal and kept me linked to home.

On my very short trip, I managed to meet up with a friend from Manila and make new ones.

I also have good reasons to suspect that the room service guy unwittingly walked in on me naked—but that's another story. So much for being alone in Singapore.

Opportunity for solitude

Two years ago, I thought I had the perfect opportunity for solitude when I went on a flight to New Zealand on an assignment. The only Filipino in that junket, I was traveling alone...three plane rides all in all.

Before my last plane even touched New Zealand soil, I had managed to spend time with three people—a pretty blonde overloaded with bridal magazines; a businessman; Frodo, the pink stuffed animal I brought; and a Filipino guy who wouldn't stop talking.

I had planned to spend those days in New Zealand working, dining, the day and ordering room service, watching bad TV and binging at night.

But I had to check those plans.

First, there was the hotel guy at the front desk who gave me free dessert.

Then, journalists from Singapore and Seoul forced me to have dinner and drinks with them at the hotel lobby.

And I spent another night having dinner with even more journalists and talking by the fountain (Elijah Wood reportedly peed in, while drunk, when he was in New Zealand shooting "Lord of the Rings."

So much for being alone in New Zealand.

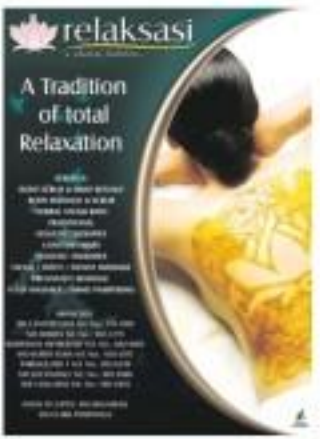
I wasn't alone on the way back either. It turns out Julius, the journalist from Hong Kong, and I were on the same flight.

So maybe the last time I was really alone was in my mother's womb.

Overly friendly freak

If you think I am an overly friendly freak who makes a career out of befriending strangers, you couldn't be more wrong. I can be pretty anti-social and have been se-

THE NEVER-ALONE GENERATION C2



You are your phone

Nokia's new line captures a whole style... and personality... range

By Wenggie Gallego

IN THE INCREASINGLY fashionable Ho Chi Minh, Nokia unveiled the new Supernova mobile phones—the 7210, 7310, 7510, and the 7610. Stylish and trendy, they change along with you.

"People like to change. They embrace change," says Daniel Crance, senior design manager for Nokia. "They want to project their personalities."

"People have their work life," Crance added, "they have their private life. So, the ability to change your product to match the way you live your life makes perfect sense."

The design impressions for the set are wide—ranging from shades and eye glasses to colorful nail polish, exclusive jelly tats, and the screaming fashion trends of bright colors.

Dolly Chan, head of GTM Line Category for Asia Pacific of Nokia, explains that the name Supernova "captures the essence of energy, optimism, and surprise."

The phones, at first glance, look energetic and hip. They are bold and loud. "You can be a very trendy and stylish person no matter what age you are," said Chan.

But more than just projecting the personalities of their owners, the phones express the flexibility of lifestyles.

"They are always with us, and our phones have become an extension of ourselves," explained Cherie Carr, vice president for sales for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. "It has become a reflection of our style."

The new Supernova series, according to Carr, "gives people an option to truly personalize their look by matching the style of their phone to their ever-changing moods."

With multimedia functions such as music players, video recording, and of course, the ever sought after camera, the Supernova series is expected to deliver hours of fun with friends while projecting the image still in a way no other phone has been able to before.

After all, your phone is you; it knows all your secrets. It becomes a vault of your most treasured messages and photographs. If you are your phone, then it should, at the very least, look like you.

Above the latest addition to the Nokia family:

Who: Alfred Vargas, actor
Gadget of choice: iPod Nano
The music: "Lily" by Soulsa, "Hey Jude" by The Beatles, "Four Minutes" by Madonna and Justin Timberlake, "I Wanna Be Starting Something" remix by Michael Jackson and Mixx, "Fallin'" by James Ginks

Who: Gang Badoy, Rock Ed Philippines
Gadget of choice: Nokia 6680
The music: Any Major Dude, Canon in D Addicts & Hit By Steely Dan, "Whishing on a Star" by Paul Weller and Flipside by GIRS

Press play

What music gadgets do people use and what do they listen to?

Who: Bianca Gracia Elizalde - model, entrepreneur
Gadget of choice: iPod Video
The music: Eric Clapton "Wonderful Tonight" (live), The Cranberries "Linger," Cheryl "Bon Jovi's "You Want To Make a Memory", Sarah Machlach ne's Path of Thorns and Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes"

Who: Gab Chee Kee, Pandayan Gitgit guitarist
Gadget of choice: iPod Touch and the Samsung i450
The music: "Beautiful Mess," Jason Mraz, "Make Up Your Mind Or Take 1 Frankie, "Right & Clark," Lil Jon Ft. Yung Ro Narcos," Eminem Solo, "Stolen Days," Sting

Who: Bibi, singer
Gadget of choice: Iphone
The music: Mercy of Daily, "Take a Bow" by Rihanna, "Outta Dats" by Usher, Fever and Take a

Who: Stephen Ko, entrepreneur
Gadget of choice: Nokia N95 8G
The music: Maroon 5 tracks, Gabriel Mac, Jack Johnson, Incubus, Timbaland Sweetness Mix by Marlon Pelgan

Who: Xiang Zulueta, makeup artist
Gadget of choice: 8 GigaPod Touch
The music: "Better Ft." by Talkit 80, "Running Up That Hill" By Kate Bush, "Just" by Radio Head, "These Sweet Words" by Norah Jones and "Walk on a Leash" by Bore

Who: Jogo Jaquela, model, Kidyanatics
Gadget of choice: I have an old school iPod photo 60 gig. I also have a 365 Cowon multimedia player, a Motorola ROKR v3 mp3 phone and a PSP
The music: "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" - U2, "Everybody Hates Chris" Theme "Kid" - Jeff Buckley, "Female of the Species" - Space, "Walk Out, Baby" - Aqueduct, "In The Morning" - Razorlight

Who: Kooky Suarez, poet, radio host, activism and individualist
Gadget of choice: Your Creative Wave and Motorola v3i
The music: "Follow In" - Gang Starr, "Setting the Drama" - Lyra, "Whenever Wherever" - Shakira, "Whenever" - Maroon5, "Unwell" - Matchbox 20

Cool tools

A roundup of the freshest gadgetry around

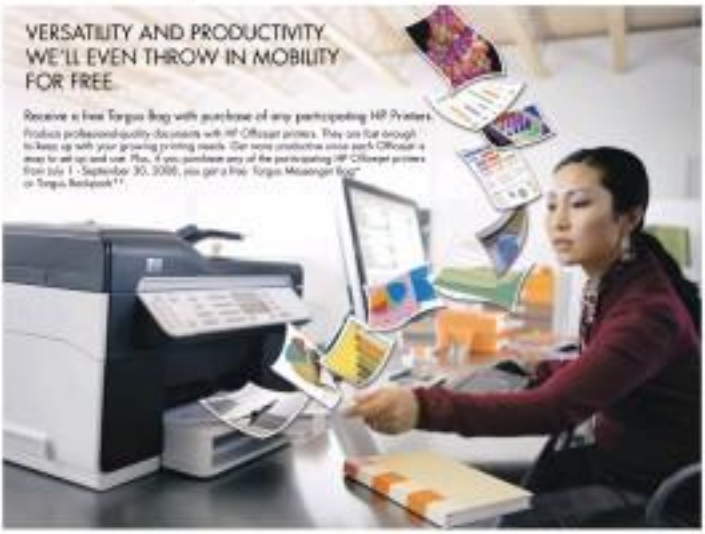
CLEAN AESTHETICS MEETS iPAD technology. You've probably encountered that kind of combination in a hundred gadgets out there in the market, especially during those times when everything's digitally awesome. But there's a difference between a useful, pretty cool and a wonderful, albeit worthless widget. Want to know what it is? Read on as we present a roundup of the freshest gadgetry around.

The Future Looks Blue

The Ruffcorn 7" Premium Digital Touch Photo Frame is minimalistically wicked. Your photos appear crisp and bright, in extreme high quality. You control it using a blue LED touch sensor that's built into a classic piano black frame. Simply touch the frame and an array of buttons will appear. The built-in battery lasts long, the gadget works with all kinds of memory cards, and it has a 320Lcm2—meaning you can transfer photos straight from your computer. Plus, the clock and calendar function make it a desktop essential. And it even has an MP3 player and built-in stereo speakers. Neat.

Th10 Supernova
Multicolor/Chrome
Features: Interchangeable Xpress-On covers, 2.2 mega pixel camera with flash, TV out connectivity, 256mb memory, mp3 player with FM radio, Thema Connect with video derivation, Gallo phone
Verdict: Whoa with most features, but slider design makes it the most cumbersome of the series. Have fun with the Thema Colorizer from where you take a picture of any object and the phone scans the color and changes the theme to suit the aquarium to match. How that's what you call color on demand!

7310 Supernova
Black w/ red or chamelleon
Features: 2 MP camera, TV out connectivity, Stereo bluetooth, mp3 player with FM radio, Exchangeable Xpress-On covers
Verdict: Definitely a trendy looking phone. Interchangeable covers make it a fashion accessory with 4 different colors to choose from the available Xpress-On cover designs allowing the "chicqa" with your moods and outfit. This is the phone that can match almost anything in your wardrobe.



The never-alone generation

Passage 61

crowd of living, sound-offish roundtrue times—which is actually (hyuun-)dayuun-(n)ikid.

If I can move people and make new friends without even trying, so can you and everyone else in this world.

Meeting people my age can pitfalls about loneliness is bullcrap—we are never alone. We are living in an age where we are forced to interact with people every day and have been equipped with all the gadgets needed to do so.

Computers, the Internet, mobile phones—these are not just tools for information and creative expression, they are ways to make human connection.

Nights out are a less intimate, super sexy, parties can be set up by posting a single Multiply entry. Life-changing conversations can be had on IM.

The next time you feel lonely, quit the pity party, leave the border of pills alone and make an actual move. Reach out. Write a blog entry, upload photos, send a text message, start talking to people on IM.

Don't feel yourself into believing no one understands you. In a world where there are websites devoted to people likening parental brain rip to their forearms, there is always someone to connect with, so shatter here on page you think you are.

You can run but you can't hide

Even trying to be alone on purpose is hard. Cutting yourself off from the rest of the world is almost impossible. Unplugging your computer and switching your phone off will only get you far. You know your friends and messages are piling up. You know you'll be connected again.

Avoiding to make a classic attempt at leaving everyone behind will still involve the help of others—people to look your orders and people who will fly us where you're your creative destination. You can run, but you can't hide.

Why would you want to?

There is no excuse for loneliness anymore. People are a push of a button away. It's just a matter of learning which ones to push.

Being lonely in today's world is the equivalent of being hungry before a free buffet. If you don't grab a plate, you have only yourself to blame.

E-mail the author at ppascua@inquirer.com.ph.

Best loneliness in 10 ways

If the big idea here is you can relate to

1. Pick up the phone and call a friend.
2. Look up old friends on Facebook, Friendster, Multiply and reconnect.
3. Answer your respective emails.
4. Send text messages to friends.
5. Text your grandparents.
6. Offer to babysit your younger siblings or your friend's children's kids.
7. Get a pet.
8. Volunteer for a reading program.
9. Join a dating site.
10. Read a book.

Cool tools

Posts page 11

Paper View

Imagine this. By merely folding, cutting and gluing cardboard, you can build your own high-tech gadget. Impossible? Listen to this: Correspondent by Mad Circus of Turkey, Intel Tu eco-consciousness paired with a stylized do-it-yourself method. How? By simply attaching electronic components—like a camera lens—to a housing board made out of cardboard. When you get tired of your toy, you can easily disassemble the gadget, recycle the housing board and use the electronic components in another gadget. Thus, Intel® helps in eliminating unnecessary electronic components and plastic parts in our environment. Pretty ingenious, eh?

Cut the Crap

Did you know that the Earth consumes 2.6 million tons of electronic consumer waste each year? Good thing a guy named Charles Bill has whipped up an idea that sums him a pat on the back. «Nutrition is a device that tells you a gadget's "nutritious levels." It tells you how much energy the product has consumed during the manufacturing process and evaluates its potential recyclable content. It also calls attention to toxic substances used in the items. In the smarter-than-thou world, a green star system is used to rate a product's overall responsibility. Encouraging the use of healthier manufacturing materials and processes. «Nutrition is, without a doubt, an admirable initiative.

Kung sa inyong anak ay may problema,
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Wonder Mom

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Pizza race

Six companies, six pizzas, one destination—the ultimate delivery challenge. Who made it? Who was late? Who made a mistake?

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Jil Lajoie

Domino's

Hotline: 9222222

The call: The phone call was quick, the operator took note of the instructions and showed no surprise—like they get calls daily from swindon who wants their pizza cut into easily small slices.

The order: Bacon Cheese burger pizza with beef on only half the pizza, cut into 16 slices.

Delivery time: 45 minutes.

The delivery boy: He brought a bunch of VIP cards and gave them to us—entitling us to a 20 percent discount the next time we call.

The pizza: The pizza that arrived had beef on only half the pizza and it was cut into 16 slices. They did not scrimp on the sauce...we were given a handful of packets.

Bonus points: Offering a VIP discount card is one.

KELLY OS

AS PEOPLE WHO RELY a lot on food delivery who pick up the phone regularly hoping to get a good, hot meal, we've all been there—late deliveries, forgotten orders, delivery guys who don't bring change.

We want to put a stop to it, we want to keep food companies on their toes.

We put six pizza delivery companies to the test—Dominoes, Greenwich, Magoo's, Pizza Hut, Shakey's and Yellow Cab.

To make things a little more challenging, we didn't just order pizzas, we gave them specific instructions. We asked them to slice the pizza into 16 parts, instead of the usual eight or 10. One ingredient should be optimized we only had the pizza. One of us is allergic, we said, to make sure they took our requests seriously.

The results were good. Most of the pizzas arrived on time (some were even early), most companies followed our instructions, and all the delivery boys brought change.

The funniest part of the test was when Jim Shakey's and Pizza Hut delivery guys arrived at the same time. If they were surprised, they didn't show it.

Six pizza companies, six pizzas, one destination—the ultimate delivery challenge. Who made it? Who was late? Who made a mistake? Read on.

The pizza race results

Domino	41 min	✓	✓	✓
Greenwich	34 min	X	✓	✓
Magoo's	36 min	✓	✓	✓
Pizza Hut	33 min	X	✓	✓
Shakey's	28 min	✓	✓	✓
Yellowcab	29 min	✓	✓	✓

Shakey's

Website: www.shakeyspizza.ph
Hotline: 77-777
The call: A machine picked up at first, but the operator soon took over. He was very thorough, even asking for a mobile number to make sure I could be reached.
The order: Manager's Choice (ham, beef, Italian sausage, green pepper and onions) with onions on only half the pizza, sliced into 16.
Delivery time: 36 minutes.
The delivery boy: He was polite. He showed us the pizza, he brought change with him.
The pizza: The pizza had onions on only half of it and it was not nice (B).
Bonus points: Offering the Flintstone cart which gets you a free pizza every time you sell and the Pizza Pedala service which allows you to surprise loved ones with a slice of Shakey's.

Pizza race

From page B1

Greenwich

Hotline: 555555
Website: www.greenwich.com.ph
The call: The operator insisted that asking for tomatoes on only half the pizza is impossible. He said, "Maybe kalo din po [sauce] nalalasa na [ang pizza]." "Please ask them to try anyway, I said. He also said 16 slices were impossible—the slices would be too small. The maximum was 10 slices, he said.
I said, please tell them to try 16 anyway. He told me to consider them Sixty Xtainer orders the next time I was throwing a party.
The order: One thrilled Chicken and Garlic pizza with tomatoes on only half the pizza, sliced into 16.
Delivery time: 34 minutes. The pizza arrived later than they said it would.
The pizza: They put tomatoes on only half the pizza but the pizza was cut into only 10 slices. I checked the receipt and saw that the operator gave instructions to cut the pizza into 10 and not the 16 I asked for.
The delivery boy: He was pleasant and he brought change.
Bonus points: Their Pizza Pedala service, which allows you to surprise your friends and family with pizza.

Magoo's

Hotline: No hotline. Each branch has a different number.
Website: www.magoo.com.ph
The call: The girl who picked up the phone at the Eastwood branch took the details and then explained that their motorcycle was in the west side but she'd pass on the order to their branch in Robinsons Galleria. The girl from the Galleria branch soon called explaining that they'd take care of the delivery but it might take a little longer than usual. That's fine, I said.
The order: The TGIF pizza (sardines, mushrooms, green peppers and garlic) with green peppers on only half the pizza, sliced into 16.
Delivery time: 36 minutes.
The pizza: The TGIF pizza arrived cut into 16 slices and with green peppers on only half the pizza.
The delivery boy: He brought change.
Bonus points: Not eating in. They didn't have a store but they found a way to get the pizza to us.

Pizza Hut

Hotline: 8111111
Website: www.pizzahut.com.ph
The call: "It's a great ... choice ma'am, I recall it myself," the operator said when I gave her my order. The phone call was late, the operator was very alert, taking note of the customizations quickly. "Multo 'yan, Ma'am," she said, when I asked for the pizza to be cut into 16 slices. That's fine, I said. She offered other promos, Sweet and Spicy Chicken Wings and an upgrade to Cheesy Deja all of which I politely refused.
The order: One family-sized Hawaiian Supreme pizza, cut into 16 slices, with green apples on only half the pizza.
Delivery time: 33 minutes. The pizza arrived earlier than they said it would.
The delivery boy: He showed us the pizza, gave us the change and even told us about a promo we might want to order next time.
The pizza: The pizza that arrived had pineapples on only half the pizza—but really, it was cut into the usual eight slices.
Bonus points: Offering a Palm Carrier for customers—that means a free pizza every time they order.

Yellow Cab

Hotline: No hotline. Every branch has a different number.
Website: www.pizzacab.com/contactus.html
The call: Yellow Cab does not have a delivery hotline but the girl who answered the phone at the Eastwood branch was efficient...even if I had to really explain to her what I meant when I said I only wanted pepperoni on half the pizza.
The order: Four-cheese pizza with pepperoni on half of it, sliced into 16.
Delivery time: 29 minutes. The pizza arrived earlier than they said it would.
The delivery boy: He brought change.
The pizza: The four-cheese pizza arrived sliced into 16, with pepperoni on half of it.
Bonus points: Offering condiments on the phone...and making sure the delivery boy brought all of them—chili flakes, hot sauce, pepper and salt.
Who should we test next? E-mail .

24/7 SUPER Radar

By Janine Cuenca-Ong and Stef Juan

FREE! the earth shake under your feet tonight when Bamboo hits the stage at the World Trade Center for **ROCK N' Rumble** at 7 p.m. Imagine, a set of ripping rock originals from these guys, who's OK if much is happening this night in the middle of everything?! This is technically a free event for Bamboo fans who bought from Footwear Sans May 15 to July 5 from select SM Mall Outlets: Megamall, Makati, North Edsa, Mall of Asia, Fairview, Pampanga, Marilao, Cubao, Trinoma, Sta. Mesa, Manila, San Lazaro, Dasmariñas, Sta. Rosa and Clark! A single receipt for a minimum purchase of P2,500 worth of Sony Footwear entitles a customer to two (2) tickets.

SEE blood and sweat fly and try not to get any on you tonight when the **National Inability Combat Championship** is on gate in Manila at the 4 Season Events Hall, Makati Ave., Makati City. The UFMC 101 Supreme will feature a throw down between the reigning middle-weight champion Cobe Badiana and the current UFMC welterweight title holder Edward Polopong. Also in the cards is the featherweight bout pitting Lito Tagaytay against Justin Cruz. Urbandub will also be on hand to provide the rocking music just right for this roaring occasion. Call 891-9999 for tickets or just get there at the door.

SMELL the popcorn and try to keep our noses from the film at **Cine Sai 2008: Japanese Film Festival** at the Shangri-La Plaza Cineplex. Get to know Japanese film beyond the anime and (although there will be six Anime Festival at the end of the month) and the stereotypical geisha and samurai depictions. The films lineup includes "Pie Shall Overcome Somedays" ("Paichiji) by director Kazuyuki Izutsu, "Linda Linda Linda" ("Handa Handa Kanda") directed by Nobuhiro Yamashita, "Genius" ("Hanaria") directed by Akihiko Shiota, "Hanging Garden" ("Kusha Teien"), directed by Sabishi Tsuda, "A Stranger of Blue" ("Ekimae ja nai Yoki") directed by Kenji Uchida, and "Seconds Jungle" ("Kurosu Jun ga") directed by Ko Nakahira. Admission is free! Schedules, call Shang Cineplex 633-4735, or the Japan Foundation 811-6155 to 58 or log on to www.jfmc.org.ph.

*Information is subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Summer Navigator at your favorite malls, bars and restaurants. The map also out 24/7 gig to 2005 for Globe and Sun and 2015 for Smart. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag247@gmail.com for inclusion in this column.

Status of *Liberty*

Facebook: the caste system of cool. You're in it

THE DAY THAT ALL YOUR friends, past lovers, former bosses, college classmates, ex-fallen models, and nutty acquaintances suck your coloring to themselves in the third person, you know that the world has gone digitally asleep.

Oh wait, that has already happened.

Ever since the cyber phenomenon called Facebook conversed millions of people all over the world to its cozy pot of mingling everyone else's business, it has spawned a new virtual culture bordering on absurdity. If you didn't know any better, you'd think that a big chunk of the human race had suddenly connected in a wild frenzy of desperately trying to find intelligent methods of social interaction.

No longer content with just saying hello, you can now "poke" or even "superpoke" a friend by throwing virtual sheep, trout, the kitchen sink or even Barack Obama at them. You can also show your affection by sending cyber bouquets into his fish, buy liquor, and fill gross patches that ensure you a piece of land in that Otherworld called the social-hole rub.

Yet beyond such bizarre new developments to scrubbing and flirting, Facebook has explored other dimensions of virtual reality through its myriad applications. Struggling by self-definition? Take a quiz! And history there are heaps of them. What color are you? What city are you? What kind of drunk are you? What Transformer are you? What "Sex and the City" character are you? What "Gossip Girl" character are you? What drug are you? What sort of killer are you?

Thanks for the appeal of these tools—it has the power to make you feel woke, or at least more interesting. Hats you really are. Bless if I believed any of those quizzes. I am a green eagle attaboiness by the name of Optimus Prime. Wielded by the axe! Herbert Muller, the delusional hippie could die by night with an address in Paris Hilton any mother son right all this time—I really am special!

Whose Line Is It Anyway?

The morning of these applications may take some day, but if I may so boldly predict the one thing that would keep the network alive are the status reports. What on this? Every person with a Facebook account has the right to declare, in one succinct sentence, what his exact is or else forming pretense. Facebook then collates all these status messages on a page you can easily access with a click.

I admit, the first time I unconsciously did little status update excerpt, my iphone started buzzing from such lameness. I mean, isn't everybody pretty much doing the same thing at that moment of writing one's status...casting the line? In because ridiculous fun that is you are to one of those chi chi cocktails calculating the spinning of a hostess bowl, where some guests copied a computer treasure on the ground floor. They rushed to it and tipped on to change their present state of affairs: "Shrend-out is partying hard!" "Ulark-and-cuch is enjoying her sun getaway at sunset!" Hmm.

I was baffled by this overriding need to define the living moment. Even if it meant actually having to put that in-target in the soul would on hold to uphill one's identity in the digital architecture. (But, I could have sworn that it was a virgin daiquiri, and not a margarita she was holding!)

There one day I joined the band wagon of status freaks. It all started, I believe, with a line that came to me while I was working late one night. I thought, dammit! I am working so hard for peanuts...I am working hard for the "man!"

A pause. I realized that it was way too good a line to leave hanging on the ephemeral fringes of thought, so scurried on a diary page to one would read. So I thought of writing that down on my status message on my Facebook page. "Wanda is working hard for the man." And there, dearly believed, was on to blogbook.

Status Anxiety

I still don't make it a daily habit to check up on my network's status reports (because it's just way too time-consuming, plus certain people still don't get the concept of conjugating in the third person), but on those days I do because the sun dawns of my contacts, I start getting the feeling that I'm on to some daily soap opera. It's practically the Holy Grail of the gossip mongers.

The status updates run the gamut of emotions. They range from cryptic messages, solicitations, declarations of love, heartbreak, global conquests, to some pretty retarded assertions. Though it's just a peek of who a person truly is, the status lines are mini revelations of personalities—you know who among the list are liars, angsty artists, philosophical, creative, boring and downright pathetic. Which is why for some people, like a good friend of mine confessed, writing down one's status in final result is one of cyberspace (or of) be thought-provoking. "I'm so pressured to write down something cool," he said, "just to stand out from everyone else."

How true that is. For in this hyperactive world, there are still a few things unchanged from our self-fragmented high school days. And that is the desire to be accepted in the rarefied circuit of cool. Yes, even in the virtual social ladder, where you're afraid to stand in the election is cheap in an android's dream.

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3. Wholesale purchases with discounts are not qualified for the promo.
4. Participating products are labeled with a pink sticker.

National Book Store

RIGHT book exchange meeting

Social networking ...

From page 1

"I plan to start a Camera Club. All the activities we have at Pepsi and events I get involved in are all the time—books, literary events, writers' groups, etc. Photography is a passion so a camera club will be a great way to meet other photographers and learn from them."

What made her successful at being a "friendster in the flesh"?

"Shanghai's really been a great city to meet all sorts of people and to get involved in so many different things. Maybe it's the whole expat culture of being in a new place where people don't know you and you don't know anyone. So you have to burst out of your shell, confront yours, and make an impression. Have the courage to try new things, pursue your interests and passions and be ready to make new friends. It's nice to have a fresh start."

If you plan to visit Shanghai, check out what else Smolden author is browsing in Portman's must-consumes.

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Social networking like no other—in Shanghai

TRUCKING books with Anita Hsiu

26-year-old Filipina has unique formula

By Kristin K. Holguin

IN THESE TECHIE TIMES, social networking is easily associated with finding your super friends (or stalking them) via Multiply, Facebook and Friendster. But for Ina Jusay, area manager of Filipino Coffee Shanghai, nothing beats social networking in the flesh.

NETWORKING queen Ina Jusay

"I came to Shanghai in 2005 on study vacation for six months and after that, it just seemed a waste of time to just go home and not practice it."

There she was given the task to develop the market for Figaro in China. "You can say that I have to be an all-around kind of person," laughs Ina.

Her greatest challenge was to get more people to come to the two-storey coffee shop and spread the word. Her initial desire way back in college is to be a librarian—"I wanted to teach or fill my library card, when a nerd"—found some fulfillment here—she devised a book swap. Bringing together people via books was the most natural thing.

"In China, it's rather difficult to get English language books or foreign books, so I got inspiration from Oprah's Book Club and decided to start something similar to that, using my store as venue."

What was even more successful was a book swap that also finds a home every third Sunday of the month. People come to our [sic] Filipino, with books they've read and they do an exchange. Not only do they meet more people with similar interests, they also have a rare opportunity to build their friendships [sic]."

Literary events are definitely the passion of Ina, as the book club is held every second Sunday; the even started a writer's night every Thursday. This is the only regular weekly group. Writers—be they freelance, aspiring or professional—hang out, share discussion groups and do writing workshops.

"Before," recalls Ina, "it was me going out there looking for writers or artists to get patronize business for my store, now it's people approaching us for events."

Socializing has gone beyond books and writing. Every second Tuesday, they have "travel gist" Jobb Mekintas, who is known for making viewers smile [sic] in China. There are so many kinds of people visiting Figaro Shanghai that Anna Irene gives the amusing nickname of "intercontinent."

Growing network

How big exactly has her personal and professional network grown as a result of all her social networking?

"Shanghai is a very transient city, so the groups pretty much maintain an average number of five to 10 people per meeting. So we can't actually measure growth in terms of numbers of attendees. My greatest source of contacts is a paid gauge for professional contacts and Facebook for more personal contacts like actual good friends and an acquaintance here and there. If you want numbers, I can tell you that more than 1,000 books have been swapped at Figaro.

"We're very close to the Philippine consulate, and it helps that they make us a stop-see when they've got guests. I've been able to meet and greet [sic] people around which I would not have had a chance to do if I had chosen to work in Manila."

So what does this 26-year-old "ambassador" have planned out to score indoors?

MORE, D2

BOST classmates at Jiao Tong University. This is where it all began.

26U LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Simon San Juan
Associate Editor Pam Pastor

IN THIS ISSUE
UAAP FEARLESS FORECAST /E4

You could be looking at the fashion force of the future

MODELS pose with the Volvo C30 Sports Coupe, touted as the 'it' car for young, dynamic people

Benilde's designers show what they've got

Text by Bianca Caronongan
26U Correspondent
Photos by JP Otiu

WITH ONE LOOK, YOU know that these students love drama. The clothes in the workshop of the Fashion Design and Merchandising (FDM) department of the DLSU College of Sr. Benilde's School of Design and Arts are clearly not for the faint-hearted. A gown made of champagne-colored embossed satin is draped over a desk; beside it lies a steel-gray dress with numerous folds and tucks—the craftsmanship is exquisite. On a mannequin is an animal-print mini skirt paired with a green corset top.

The workshop is filled with clothes that burst with colors and textures. Some of them recall the flamboyant style of dressing, with numerous layers and embellishments of every kind—sequins, lace, faux pearls. Others are more minimal, but there is still a clear sense of drama in the style; you can almost imagine a movie star wearing the clothes in an awards night.

It's not difficult to spot the inspiration for the clothes, as the whiteboard in the workshop is filled with fashion's iconic names: YSL, Prada, Valentino, Givenchy. But despite the clear preference for extravagant clothes, you know that the designers are not entirely unreasonable. Minus a sprinkling of beach hers, or a couple of inches added to the hemline, it's easy to imagine the clothes on any ordinary person, and not just on movie stars.

"We teach our students to be designers, not just artists," said Mitoli Goswami, chair of the FDM department. "Success as a designer is measured by how much you sell, so it's important for us to let the students know that there is so much to their course than just drawing clothes."

Goswami added, "However, we allow our students to explore as much as they can. College is the best place for experimentation, and our faculty is here to let the students know everything about the industry."

(For more on the student designers, turn to page E2)

BLACK Flyer Guerra's peach bubble gown with ruched hem

JANINA Estipona's sinuous and origami-inspired dresses

RALPH NG's six-way dress

PURPLE and fuchsia dress by Raissa Bagano

Visit the photographer at www.studiolampos.com
Styling editor Bianca Caronongi
Makeup by Jacqueline Ann, Memphis Bolcon and Andra Catapi of The Body Shop, using the Soundproofed Summer Collection
Additional makeup by Mae Agustin
Shot at the College of Sr. Benilde School of Design and Arts
Special thanks to Ompa Manolistani

GRAY mini dress by Carla Cruz

BUNNICA Lee's fun top and skirt and sleeveless kimono

Meet the designers

JR Almacha, 20

What inspired you to take fashion design?
Fashion 70. I think there was something I might have seen on the channel that made me decide to take up fashion.

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
I admire a lot of designers. To name a few, I like Chanel, YSL, Gucci, Balenciaga, Dior and Elie Saab. They just really wow me.

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
I want to be very versatile and have a wide-range when designing clothes.

What is your trademark?
I make sure my work is always clean.

Like JR's clothes? Contact him at 0920-481 7103 or e-mail jr_almacha@yahoo.com. You can also visit http://jrjapet7787.multiply.com

Bianca Josephine Lee, 22

What inspired you to take fashion design?
I've always wanted to take fashion design. I love dressing up myself and other people as well — it makes me feel good!

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
I love Michael Kors and Carolina Herrera. I love how they design, simple and very classy.

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
I like making dresses.

What is your trademark?
I put that classic, ruffled, simple yet sophisticated silhouettes.

Like Bianca's clothes? Contact 0922-6462022 or visit http://lianaa07.multiply.com

Roxanne Bagano, 20

What inspired you to take fashion design?
My late great Aunt Ellen Bustos and paper dolls.

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
Princess Diana, Audrey Hepburn, Monique Lhuillier, Vera Wang and Roberto Cavalli. I take inspiration from people I meet, places I visit, and of course, research!

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
Cocktail dresses and gowns.

What is your trademark?
I love classy silhouettes with graceful detail.

Like Roxanne's clothes? Contact 0917- 9262539, 0923-3448911; e-mail roxanne_bagano@yahoo.com or visit http://roxsbagano.multiply.com

Janna Katipunan, 21

What inspired you to take fashion design?
I got my inspiration from my mother's designer bags and clothes. I wanted to be like one of those designers and eventually create my own things.

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
I always look up to the creations of Proenza Schouler and Giambattista Valli. I get inspiration from anything and everything under the sun.

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
I'd prefer to make RTW clothes.

What is your trademark?
My clothes are simple yet edgy.

Like Janna's clothes? Contact 0921-9222961 or visit http://janna.multiply.com

Carla Cruz, 19

What inspired you to take fashion design?
Barbie dolls and my love for art.

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
Audrey Hepburn, Jackie Kennedy-Onassis and Emmanuel Singers.

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
Most definitely, RTW.

What is your trademark?
I usually focus on gracefull silhouettes and cuts.

Like Carla's clothes? Contact 0916-6303156 or e-mail carla_32_18@yahoo.com

Belin Flydiet Guerra, 19

What inspired you to take fashion design?
Paper dolls! I used to draw clothes on paper and cut them for my paper dolls.

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
Monique Lhuillier, John Galliano and Elie Saab. I take inspiration from places I've been, art pieces, and movies.

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
Cocktail dresses, gowns and RTW.

What is your trademark?
My clothes are textured and have volume.

Like Belin's clothes? Contact her at 0920-5502328 or e-mail belinflydiet@yahoo.com

Ralph Michael B. Ng, 21

What inspired you to take fashion design?
Inspiration would be for a temporary context. I took up this path to express my passions, namely music, film, theater, painting, etc. Out in the long run, I took up fashion design because I believe that it is one of what I was born to do.

Who are your fashion icons, and where do you take inspiration?
Fashion icons, for me, are those people who love life. Mostly though, I find Renaissance women very interesting — happy in their gloomy setting. Their self-tailored yet clothing glows on their sense of being. I just browse through old photo books and look into their eyes.

What kind of clothes do you want to make?
Clothes that define a sense of identity to the wearer, which don't portray their physique yet those that define their inner being.

What is your trademark?
Most of the time, I use a neutral color palette to emphasize texture and bold colors to define the feeling of the garment.

Like Ralph's clothes? Contact 0928-4942481.

I'm alive, I'm afraid, but still fighting

I am a medical student

By Angela V. Ignacio
24/7 Correspondent

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN PROUD OF THE fact that I'm not afraid of anything. (Well, except for spiders, mangled fingernails and falling in love, but that's a different story altogether.) After three years in medical school, however, here's the cold, hard truth: I've never been this scared in my entire life, and I have every reason to be.

I'm not sure if it was Hurricane Katrina that triggered what said, "The more I learn, the more I realize the less I know." They must have had an medical circles in mind.

A day in the life of a clerk basically consists of rushing paperwork, memorizing mnemonics, deciding what elements of big relatives, cranky peers and even insolent superiors, and feeling caged and useless 24/7. Like every batch of bright-eyed young hopefuls, we entered this last stage with absolutely no idea on how and where to start. We were like headless chickens running around the hospital, making mistakes and getting yelled at in the process.

No sleep, no food, no bath

I underbreaks, grand rounds, lazy burns — name it, we've probably endured, felt and sacrificed like it as our points. No sleep, no food, no bath. Yup, we are the lowest of the medical pecking order; that's pretty much a given.

We spend all day running errands, those we've left while nursing her junk food, visits to/fro and gossip to get us through sleepless nights of hospital duty. We feel so tired and hungry that all we can do is nod mindlessly and mumble "Yes, doctor; Sorry po, doctor; Next time po, doctor," even when it's really not our fault to begin with. It gets to the point that even the thrill of being called "Doktor" or "Doktora" fades every quickly, because they say it in such a condescending or sarcastic way.

The fact that our friends and loved ones also suffer doesn't help, either. No matter how hard they try, they will never be able to understand our situation, unless they were to do the same hours. Our classmates might be the only ones who can understand us, but they're too busy trying to convince each other (and themselves) that they're the worst off than everybody else. So, in essence, we're on our own.

Sure, everyone goes through this crap everyday. But the big difference here is people's lives are literally at stake. Never mind the daily verbal lashing or the overwhelming fatigue. Every mistake we make or every remiss we fail to do immediately might cost us someone's health or, worse, someone's life. Then, once we reach the breaking point, we start to wonder: Why am I still doing this? Am I really cut out for this kind of life? Is it really worth all the trouble?

Biggest fear

As much as we try not to think about it, all our doubts and fears boil up — relentlessly nipping at our heels, gnawing their way into our souls, whispering words of despair in our ears until we feel like swallowing any time. We may be afraid of a lot of people or things, but the biggest fear of all is not being able to help the very people you're supposed to help, not to know the answer when the occasion calls for it, to be unable to do your job. I know what that fear is very, very well, and it lives in the hearts of all others who are in this profession, whether they acknowledge it or not.

As Dr. Webber from "Grey's Anatomy" says, "Being afraid means you still have something to lose." Whether it's our own sanity or the hundreds of thousands of pesos our parents painstakingly shell out, the things we've refused to lose are the very reasons we keep fighting. At the heart of it is the fact we are still striving to improve the quality of life for those around us is reward enough. And that makes every hardship worth it.

Kanye West's hip hop anthem couldn't have been more timely: "Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger." For as long as we have the strength to endure, we gain the power to heal.

Call it foolhardy or plain naivete, but I still believe in the profession I chose and in the people who continue to pursue it in the face of adversities. This is not a vocation for the faint-hearted or glorify what seems to be a grim, thankless job. I'll rather think of it as a calling, as in all the amazing heroes who went to make the world a better place, one patient at a time.

Long road ahead

As for me, I've decided to look at my fears as something that's constantly changing me, guiding me to be a better and stronger person. It's a long, long road ahead and I know that it's only going to get much more difficult. There will be more sacrifices and more pressures.

True, I've shed so much blood, sweat, tears. But I strive to survive because I want to claim my rightful place in the world as someone who aims to make a difference. I refuse to be mediocre or to see things through to the very end. I will enjoy my career and my position at the same time, no matter how impossible it may seem at times. And, so impossible as it may seem, I will find my McDreamy. Most of all, I will not give up when I see just or brutal I want to become.

I might not become the best doctor the world has ever seen. I might see one's millions or have my name etched on the annals of medical greatness. But the one thing that my fears can't take away from me is the fact that I'm alive, still afraid, but most importantly, still fighting.

CLEVER and unsure, having fun during Surgery rotation.

E-mail the author at angiev.ign@gmail.com.

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UAAP madness begins

By Rizalyn Leonard M. Pinpin
INQ7 Correspondent

HOOPSMANIA CONTINUES FOR BASketball fans in the country as the 71st season of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) Men's Basketball Tournament opens with a bang today at the Araneta Coliseum.

This year promises to be full of action and surprises as the participating schools all made key acquisitions and refinements during the off-season to boost their chances of making the final four and ultimately bagging the coveted title.

Adding color to the season will be the fact that this year's host outfit is the University of the Philippines, which is also celebrating its centennary. A fun-run opening pregame (courtesy of the Metro U) will kick off festivities. But before anything else, here's what fans can expect this year from the eight teams:

E-mail the author at sc_inq@yahoo.com

De La Salle Green Archers

Record Last Year: 9 wins, 5 losses.
Won the championship against UE, 3-0.

After a memorable comeback season which they capped with a championship against a heavily-favored UE rival, the Green Archers will be out to defend their crown against tough competition and start another era of dominance.

To boost their chances of a repeat, coach Franz Pumaren got the services of UAAP Juniors Mythical Five member Jessie Rante, who was elevated from La Salle's Juniors team, and guards LA Revilla and Ayoub Bagadion from the Letran-de Ram Colts in the NCAA. To fill up the void left by the departure of veteran guards Ti-Tong and Chris Villanueva, Rantes' key acquisitions a center Mac Villanueva who once played for the UFO Jumbo Munchies, which added more heft for the archers. With holdovers Rico Maierhofer and Al Louis-Emile Nolte, the Green Archers are to be taken very seriously if any team intends to snatch the title out of their hands.

UST Growling Tigers

Record Last Year: 8 wins, 6 losses. Lost to ADMU in the step-ladder playoffs.

If there is one team this year that could surprise the league, it would probably be the UST Growling Tigers. This is for the reason that they are the only team that did not participate in any pre-season tournament and had their entire line-up intact from last season's 14th placed ending under the wire.

Despite their absence, their off-season moves couldn't be kept in the dark as coach Pido Jarencio acquired the services of promising rookies in Bonaventure International School standout Clark Bautista and former De La Salle-Zobel Junior Archer Jervi Pontejos, to name a few. Returnees Juan Care and reigning MVP Jerry Codiñera are both playing in their final year, a unique chance to hold the team together with three solid artist Kirsten Alfaro and versatile forward Ryan Arellano.

UE Red Warriors

Record Last Year: 14 wins, 0 losses. Lost in the Finals vs DLSU, 0-2.

Forgetting the heartbreaking loss they suffered courtesy of the Archers, the UE Red Warriors moved on and landed over the FEU-DiliTech's Tom Apinan while they waited out champions, Ateneo, and their stable of rising sophomore talents. With the loss of versatile forwards Mark Bonifacio and Rabeh Al-Hussaini, coach Boots Rosario will bank on the leadership of guard Mario Acosta, sophomore James Martinez, the versatile Hans Thiele and Paul Lee, who has been a big revelation for the team last year. The Red Warriors may no longer be gunning for a sweep in the eliminations, but fans can expect that they are itching to get back into the finals to get another crack at the championship.

FEU Tamaraws

Record Last Year: 8 wins, 6 losses.

After failing to make it to the semi-finals last season, the Tamaraws have Coach Glenn Capacio may count out this season as a recovery for when the Final Four spot is up for grabs for quite a number of years already and having only a small number of them returning next.

Expected to return from Blue Eagle and last year's Rookie of the Year JR Quinahan will spell problems for other Season Opener rivals from semi-finalists Pascal Biay, Carlos Fraser Kara who will play the center position. The veteran smarts of Reno Ola Fernandez and Mac Barroca will also add stability to the Tamaraws' offense especially during clutch situations.

UP Fighting Maroons

Record Last Year: 8 wins, 14 losses.

After a disappointing winless season last year, the Diliman-based cagers are eager to get the seasons started on the right track and get back on their winning ways. Under the guidance of newly-appointed coach Aboy Castro, the Maroons are expected to play a different kind of basketball this year, despite having a team full of rookies and sophomores.

They are expected to use their quickness to their advantage as they lack the presence of dominant big men, having only Magi Sison on their side now. With the departure of forward Soc Rivera and Clarence Ejeras, they are expected to rely more on the leadership of veteran Wendell Ilo and the sure-shooting guard Mike De Asis and Mortar Bayno to win some games and complicate the Final Four picture.

Ateneo Blue Eagles

Record Last Year: 9 wins, 5 losses. Lost to DLSU in the step-ladder playoffs.

The rising stars of the Blue Eagles are locked on one thing, and that is the UAAP championship. After clinching the title in the Nike Summer League, the Loyola-based cagers are considered one of the favorites to reach at least the UAAP Finals this year. It will take it all.

Securing highly-coveted rookies such as last year's NCAA Juniors MVP Ryan Buenafe, Chiong Ateneo Collegian Justin Chua, Ateneo Icon Rhenz Abando from Faith Academy and PCCAA All-First Team member Mike Salas, with consistent coach Norman Black's already-outstanding unit of Jai Reyes, Rich Long and skipper Chris Tiu. With returning big man Wesley Gonzales and Rabeh Al-Hussaini manning the middle, expect the Blue Eagles to be a deep and balanced team that could cause opponents troubles in both the offensive and defensive end of the court.

Adamson Falcons

Record Last Year: 2 wins, 12 losses

After an ordeal-filled year last season, the Adamson Falcons' theme for this year will be rebuilding. A new system may well be adopted by the team as come back-ing coach Leo Austria returns for a second tour of duty as Falcons' coach after dreading to elevate his coaching prowess last year to be the best in the league.

Despite the key losses this year in Leo Canaday, Jeg-mar Real Hegerato and explosive scorer Patrick Cabahug, five new rookies and returning forward Mon-Agustin will join the Falcons as led by Paul Gumaplac in their quest to contend for at least a spot in the Final Four.

NU Bulldogs

Record Last Season: 6 wins, 8 losses

Last season, the NU Bulldogs played the spoiler's role as they beat a heavily-favored eleven squad in their final game which sounded the Blue Eagles' hopes of locking a twice-to-beat advantage in the semi-finals. This year could be a different story as the Bulldogs have the services of veteran gunner Jonathan Fernandez, point guard Dyrex Mulaguadis and holding center Joseph Lingcaan-Lingcan.

Aiding the veteran players being added into their lineup, coach Manny Dandan believes others to focus on as he expects leadership from rookie point guard Jonathan Jalosjos and the hard-working forward Edwin Asoro. If the Bulldogs are able to get well during the off-season, we can expect them to win a number of games and perhaps break the hearts of a number of teams again.

Former BF blackmails her with their sex video

DEAR JEWEL,

I'm 21 and still in college. I'm fed up with school already! I can't seem to get past my senior year. My parents are breathing down my neck. They can't wait for me to graduate. Anyway, I have this younger sister who is also in college. But that's not why I wrote. My ex-boyfriend is threatening to send out our sex video if I didn't give him money. In short, he's blackmailing me. I don't know this jerk, and I only went out with him for the first ground so I can pay my sweetie of an ex. Help!

HESITANT HOME VIDEO STAR

Dear Video Star,

You make me glad I don't have children. You seem so unsuccessful about what you've done, and what you're doing to your life. I want to go back in time to when you were maybe two years old and tell your mother to send you back to bed. Or maybe send you to a nunnery to learn hand work and constant prayer.

I was not born yesterday. I'm politically aware that the sexually active population is getting younger and younger through the years, and I'm not even getting started on kids that. What I don't get is the need to document things, and then freak out the hottest ends up being sent to Quiapo or uploaded on Youtube.

However, your case is a little one-sided. Don't give him any money. Chances are, half your school already saw the video. Paying him once would be a pointless effort to save your reputation. Drop him and live with irreputable in the video, and soon it will die down. Get your sister out over and done with. Find out that will teach you that money is the product of honest work, and the next time a camera is pointed at you, have the sense to be fully clothed.

I don't have five-pound coffee.

DEAR JEWEL,

I'm a girl, and I'm bothered because another girl is romancing me. I don't know what I did to imply that I like my own kind but how to pursue me. At first, I told her politely that I'm not interested, but she's persistent. There I cited being rude, it still didn't work. How can I get her off my back?

STRAIGHT STRAIGHT STRAIGHT

Dear SSS,

I can't think of anything right now, but all the top of my head, have you tried introducing her to other girls who might be interested? Distract her at the fact. Tell her you're sorry that you're not like that, take her up for coffee but would she feel better if you found her a date? I hope at this point you know your matter a little so you can find someone that would be a cost of match. You don't want her celebrating her behalf that there's no one else but you, if the date goes up in flames.

Cody out for good.

Jewel

DEAR JEWEL,

I'm getting married soon, and my fiancé has a 9-year-old daughter being with him. For some reasons, his daughter hates me. When we try to bring her to our dates so we can bond, I end up being left by a book or my hand toy. Once she bit me. I talked to my future mother-in-law about it. If she was like that with her dad's other girlfriends, and she said no. I am her dad's only girlfriend of-for-the rest. Darn. I love my fiancé and I love that kid. I want to make it work but how?

NOT AN EVIL STEPMOTHER

Dear Stepmom,

You just told me what I needed to know. You love the kid, therefore, he pissed. She might be seeing you as an intruder in her life—she had been living with her dad for quite a number of years. Don't force things, and don't expect her to accept you overnight. I'm not a child psychologist, but I have sisters and nephews who taught me that flexibility is sometimes a self-defense mechanism.

When you're together, don't smother her with attention. Let her come to you, as she eventually will after she sees that you're not a threat. If you bring her to your dates, let your fiancé attend to her while you're there. Don't value she's used to. She needs to know if she can trust you, and once a reward. Relax, she's still five, and you have the rest of your lives to try and get along.

Best wishes!

Jewel

E-mail Jewel at jewel.ldmp@yahoo.com.ph.

Pick up this month's YOU

PICK UP YOU AND EXPLORE THE hands-on jungle and get to know 21 athletes who are bound for shine in the season's UAAP and NCAA. You, Hugo becomes Publications's newest offering for college students, is available in your favorite bookstores nationwide.

JOLIE AND HEAVEN. Fox executives to screen adaptation of comic-book series.

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre ● Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

IN THIS ISSUE

■ The thespic gospel according to Smith, Streep /G8

NOW SHOWING

Charismatic performances boost action, dramatic flicks

SIENNA. Memorable in an opportunistic matter in "Pangalan."

By Rito P. Asilo

THIS WEEK, WE WATCHED TEDDY BOY, writer-director's triumphant Hollywood debut, "Hancock," the R-13 endless-screen adaptation of Mark Millar's comic-book series, as well as Zoren Legaspi's engaging ensemble piece, "Pagpag: Siyam na Buhay" (Unstoppable), which—along with last year's fun-filled "Pisay"—is the Pinoy director's most accomplished work to date.

If you've seen Weisscandence's 2009 mind-blowing vampire actioner, "Night Watch," and its "Day Watch" sequel now years later, you wouldn't consider Jose Angelica Jada's (Sienna) Fay, managed to flip the car she's driving over other vehicles during a breathtaking car chase. —And we're not talking about a forward or backward flight perpetile here, mind you—she does it sideward, and with easy flair.

Secret society

In the movie, a mask, 24-year-old office drone, Wesley Gibson (played by James McAvoy), is initiated into the order of highly skilled assassins, The Fraternity—a thousand-year-old secret society headed by the charismatic Sloan Erlington Frommer, that "takes out" all people who threaten to bring the world in chaos.

It's easy to understand why Gibson wants a better life: He's a hypochondriac, his best friend is having an affair with his live-in girlfriend, and his first manifest boss is on his back all the time.

So, when Sloan recruits the stressed-out protagonist into the brotherhood to go after Cross (Thomas Kretschmann), a former member who's alleged to have killed Wesley's estranged father, he accepts. Under the supervision of Sloan, he trains with Sloan's best people to get himself ready for his eventual showdown with Cross, who happens to be...well,

CHARISMATIC 11

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sun CELLULAR

Charismatic performances boost action, dramatic flicks

[illegible]

just watch the movie.

With a hot competent ICSC Ghosts story would have looked like a run-of-the-mill, B-movie actioner, but Mowry-orthodox Wesley's jealous, reckless and final countenance with so much affecting drama and empathetic understanding that it's hard for viewers not to root for him.

Julie, who murders every scene she's in, almost steals the movie from Mowry and Reinvestavero's high-flying, gravity-defying theatrics and frenzied, hyperkinetic pacing. Rosé Peris, [illegible] never really knows how to make full use of her stunning screen presence.

It's the production's simplistic mood that's hard to take: failing to make the world a better place. But, as a popcorn action flick, "Haunted" is one heck of a roller-coaster ride!

No Rules

Last year, we enjoyed Jenna Dewan's coming-of-age ensemble dramedy, "Tempted," about teenage and pubescent guys...but we thought it was only a fluke, because we found many of the hard-working stargazers' past productions pretentious and mediocre (remember "Baby-ni Lola 2")...

With "Pasyahan," Tate's collaborative with screenwriter Dennis Evangelista, we're happy to note that the director finally comes of age. He breaks away from his stylistically flashy but largely inconsistent oeuvre—and even weans away himself performances from his actors, who play the residents of a slum community in Malabon. Their less convincing and collide in their search for a better future.

The movie has its flaws, but it deserves kudos for its thematic persistence and sleek look [courtesy of Noriy Ning's glorious photography].

Gloria Romero, who plays the mother of an adulterous husband, pares the component out with an out-of-the-box performance.

The beautiful-as-ever Snooky Serna, devoid of her trimming [illegible] face and hammy delivery, likewise comes up with a memorable [illegible] turn as the unpronounceable mother of an ambitious movie hit player [Kiana Ramillo]. Also delightful in her role is Ryan Eigenmann, who [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

'Taong Grasa' goes to Japan

VELOSO. Singular success with his one-man play.

By Nestor U. Torre

IN THE 1980S, LOU VELOSO SCORED A direct hit with his one-man play, "Taong Grasa," which was premiered more than 20 times in UH to great acclaim.

This September, Lou, a cycling "Taong Grasa" by way of a new production that will have some perfectionist in the Sta. Ana Arts Center. The shows are "farewell" performances, because on Sept. 20, Lou is flying to Japan to perform the short play there, under the auspices of the Japan Foundation.

Second home

Lou's Japan performances are the result of the artist and Manila City councilor's close collaboration with ace lighting designer, Shoko Hamamatsu, who has made the Philippines her second home for many years now.

Shoko's light designs are so good that she's highly respected and sought-after in Japan and other countries, but she likes living in the Philippines so much that she spends many months each year here.

This has been a boon for Philippine theatre, which has benefitted greatly from Shoko's artistry-artistic and theatre lighting. In addition, Shoko has put up the Hiang Arts Center to provide a wide range of artistic services, not the least of which are her lighting workshops, which have produced fine graduates who are now active in theater productions here, as well.

Since Lou heads the Sta. Ana Arts Center and Shoko has her Hiang Arts Center, it was easy for them to come to a most compatible and productive meeting of artistic minds. This led to their joint initiative to put up a lighting workshop/artist summer, which had for its overarching purpose the lighting design for Lou's revival production of "Taong Grasa."

He caught the dress rehearsal of the show some weeks ago, and marveled how Shoko's workshoppers were able to enhance its already striking drama with their beautifully textured illumination.

That's the key word, because their lighting truly illuminated the hidden meanings in the stunningly documentary life of Lou's characters, scavengers who had dropped out of society.

In the eyes of others, he had ceased to be human—and yet, Lou's portrayal and the play's production and lighting design made it unerringly clear that, underneath all that grime and seeming lack of humanity, a human being continued to exist, think and feel.

Mannerisms

Lou invests a lot of himself in the role, coming his performance to flare with authentic pain, intensity and conviction. He recalls that, the first time he created the raving grand character, he spent two days, while an actual scavenger, not just studying him for his characteristic gestures and mannerisms, but also to get under his skin, so to speak—and into his mind and heart. He felt so strongly for this aspect of modern man, at the end of every show, he found himself weeping copious tears.

While tears are a part of the "Taong Grasa" experience for both actor and viewer alike, the play also has its stimulating aspect, because it shows that even the least "worthwhile" members of the human race never lose his humanity—and worth.

Quest for a . . .

From page F2

Diaz" and Cecilio's "Irenglish Khan." The British Film Institute has copies of Lino Brocka's "Maynila: Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag," "Bayan Ko" and "Insiang," and Edgar Reyes's "Gumiks Kami Noon... Paano Kayo Sigurado?"

A Mike de Leon collection is anticipated in Singapore. Lav Diaz's movies can be found in Vienna. Ding Aguilar's "Macunaya" is in Brussels. Those produced by Armida Siguion-Reyna can be found in Los Angeles. Ishmael Bernal's "Himala ng Isang" is in Berlin. New York's Museum of Modern Art has a copy of "Bona." Fukuoka's city library likewise has a collection of Filipino features. If this trend continues, we will certainly hear direct access to our own films!

In the meantime, the work for the establishment of a National Audio-Visual Archive resumes. The future is bright indeed, although it doesn't look that bright, either. People are pushing for the collaboration of the Film Development Council and the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Resources

Since the FDCP is mandated to act on the archiving needs of the industry, the idea is to speed up its work by collaborating with CCP's archive—to make use of resources that are already available!

The dream of having a National Audio-Visual Archive will be realized—simply because there are *Pinoys* who worship at the altar of Cinema. To use the words of Aznar's superfan, we are devoted to this god "super-to-the-max!"

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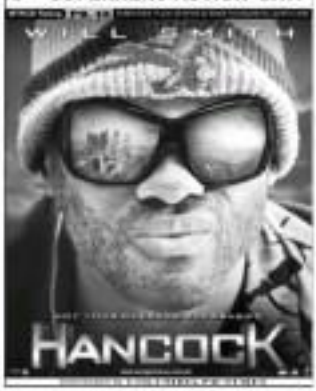

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Lino Brocka after 'Maynila'

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER "MAYNILA: SA MGA Kuko ng Liwanag" was screened to great acclaim in 1975, Lino Brocka shot "Cain, Medusa, Mlyonkalye, Bumbero, Playmates, Subdob, Longget" in Olongapo City. The film was unique in its own right, because it was a drama-comedy that cast the "legit" likes of Laurice Guillen, Mirah Mishti and Anne Rothlyn — as strippers!

There came "Inakang," with Hilda Koronel in the title role. The relatively small film caused a stir in festivals abroad, and Brocka was on a roll!

Unique drama

In that order came "Tahan Na, Empoy, Tahan," another unique drama about familial relations.

In 1978, however, Brocka has to "go commercial" again with the story "Minamasamat" But, he quickly regained his artistic form with "Bona," "Jaguar," "Insiang," with Dolphy and child wonder, Nike Muhlach.

His next film, "Gumising Ka, Maria," was bigger and more commercial, as was "Hayop sa Hayop." Brocka then ended the year with "Kaka Gregorio," which was also commercial, but had a more serious edge.

Thus, 1979 turned out to be Brocka's busiest year, with five films on view. His comeback shifting from "quality" to "commercial" serves as an interesting paradigm for his career.

Ever, more interestingly, it dramatizes how he was able to "survive"—and even flourish—in the generally "quality-productive" world of local movies.

Nineteen seventy-nine was another productive year, with "Jao, Raymond, Amok," "Ingrate"

"BONA." Superlative study of movie fan worship.

and "Ina Ka ng Anak Mo"—all estimable films, in particular, by "Jaguar" elicited more than its fair share of plaudits and was cited in festivals abroad, thus adding to Brocka's growing reputation as international movie circles as an auteur director of exceptional talent, social commitment and artistic potential.

In 1980, however, Brocka "went commercial" once more to pay the groaning piper and mugged "Hahaw na Puting Buhay," and "Angela Markado." But, he ended the year on the side of the angels of cinema with "Bona," his superlative study of movie fan worship, with the Nora Aunor superbly playing the title role.

Despite Bona's other fine performances, it can be argued that "Bona" is her best film of all, because in it, viewers found the most sensitive, perfect melding of role and actress.

Then, back to reality: More commercial projects followed: "Cover Girls," "Bunga," "Encarnacional," "Adela," "Inang Lauren," "Tatlong Ataliba Alunan at Misis," "Caught in the Act," "PX." —Was Brocka giving up on "serious" filmmaking?

Not so fast: "In This Corner" was a quality entry, before other commercial movies followed—"Pulgas Ilgas, Hepatitis," "Cain at Abel," "Bumgaro sa Paraiso," "Tito Property," "Adultery," "Ako ang Isang Kamao," "Experience" —Hey, maybe Brocka was going the way of all flesh—and flash!

Happily, he soon came up with the fab Aga Muhlach classic, "Miguelito, ang Batang Rebelde," before lapsing again with "White Slavery."

Political realities

Then came one of his most remarkable artistic triumphs, "Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim," which was praised internationally for its stark realities of harsh political realities in the Philippines.

The Brocka movies that followed weren't remarkable—"Ikaw ang Kuya ng Buhay ng Diyos!" "Napakasakit, Sinta Echile," "Magkaibigan Sa Lansangan," "Pinoy Ex ang Dalaga," "Tubong Malibu ng Pag-ibig," "Macho Dancers," "Sinungaling Sa mga Diyos!"

However, an exceptional film quickly compensated for them: "Dekpinkadia," another

BROCKA. His comeback clothing from "quality" to "commercial" serves as an instructive paradigm for his career.

THE LEGENDARY director during a shooting break with Jhenbok Bess (left) and Lolita Rodriguez.

searing political work. After two or so movies, "Babaeng Ako," Bulaklak Kita" and "Sinong Tapos Na ang Kalbo-man," another political film, the strangely satirical "Tatlong-pung Ka Sa Lusak," delighted Brocka's loyalists.

After that, comedy commercial movies followed—"The Jumanik Labs," "Milagra," "Ano, Bakit Ako Ala Pa-dapat?," "Sa Kabila ng Lahat," "Bidyo sa Dibdib," "Walang Ka Sa Diyos," etc.

But, Brocka's reputation as one of the country's best film directors was already so strong that, long after his unexpected and most tragic death in 1991, he continues to be hailed as one of the most consistent filmmakers the country has produced.

Tours, Leisure & Chow

Hyatt Hotel and Casino named 'Best Business Hotel in the Philippines'

HYATT HOTEL AND CASINO MANILA HAS BEEN VOTED "BEST Business Hotel in the Philippines" in the 2007 10th Annual Best Business Hotels in Asia Awards organized by Business Asia magazine. The nominees in each category are chosen by a panel of industry experts, and the winners are then determined by Business Asia readers from across the region through popular vote via paper and online ballots.

After just three years of operation, Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila is delighted to have received its first award from Business Asia. The hotel continues to provide an inviting experience for business travellers and, combined with fine cuisine and exceptional guest service, endeavors to meet the specific preferences and needs of a discerning business traveller in search of privacy, convenience and uncommanding level of personalized service.

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Weekend overnights at The Bellevue is the one to consider but not to price. Staycations offer low rates for guests who wish to spend a tranquil night in a place with premium amenities and facilities. For only Php,800 net, get that needed sleep in their luxurious rooms, have a few laps in the pool, run a few miles at the gym, avail of the complimentary lunch or dinner buffet at Cafe D' Asie, and take two drinks for the night at 20/20 Bar and enjoy the night off by checking your e-mails and networks in the comfort of your room using their unlimited high-speed internet. A great buffet breakfast awaits you and your loved one as you wake up the following day while The Bellevue Spa's aromatic oils and expert manners at the third floor await your arrival. Un-tranquility breaker tone your tired body and delight in the amazing services of The Bellevue, the premier luxury accommodation of the Ortigas. For inquiries, call 771-4000.

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HEKBOKOMOK — BY JOMAR TEJIDO

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABEJA

PULDOK — BY RAFJAN D. TATUYO PALAMBUNG

PUGAD BABOY — BY PH. JUNIOR

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABALINAS

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

GLUMPH — BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

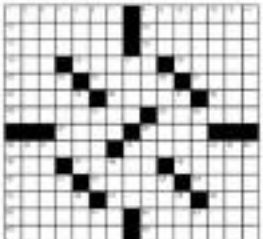
ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYRA CHRISTIANO

LOVEMOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

KOKO MACHINE — BY MANDI KOREN

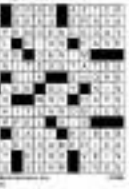
SEM — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Sam Pease
Chicago, IL
7/5/08

Today's Puzzle Solved



ACROSS
1 Hacienda (Richie)
8 Tax unfavorably
14 One of the Forbes
15 Exist's close friend(s)
17 Medicinal concoctions
18 Anonymous
19 Create likes
20 Checkout
21 Irregularly worn
22 Gender and others
23 Adams and Hindle
25 Ingredient
26 Cinnamon bun
27 Chinese fan
28 Fine cotton
31 Worthy of confession
33 Father of all Cadmus
37 Cholderdash ingredient
38 Tumbleweed
39 Western
40 Palatial roof
41 Biden's '88 opponent
42 Change of an offer
43 Donkey's cry
45 Assam's main
46 The O'Connor's pianist sister
47 Comments
48 Portion (C.J. to "The Waltons Reboot" scribe)
50 Hot, spicy
52 Complete successfully
55 Small mattress
56 Hacienda tie-tool
57 Bikers
58 Friend's real name on "Seinfeld"
59 Name suffix
60 Most composers
61 Commuter
62 Pete Rose's nephew Aaron

DOWN
1 Tax-sheltered (Scott) company
2 Inadvertently or hastily
3 Nicholas
4 Lusty movements
5 Masculine bird in an original name
6 Sheltered
7 Pale
8 Cable's mate
9 Old automobile
10 Instructive
11 Contributor's cry
12 Makes beloved
13 Ending with "Sing"
21 Complete successfully
24 Small mattress
25 Hacienda tie-tool
27 Bikers
29 Friend's real name on "Seinfeld"
30 Name suffix
31 Most composers
32 Commuter
33 Pete Rose's nephew Aaron
34 Harassers
42 Deity in Edessa
43 Leading power
44 Hen's announcement
45 Methods
48 Empty spaces
51 ___-hole (golf maneuver)
53 Speaker on a new
54 Israeli statesman Abba
56 One with regrets
57 Part of a play
58 Buy the cow

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Someone finds you interesting because you always have something to say. You have a firm mind, and one is certainly observant. You're a champion when it comes to the art of conversation. Don't overdo it, though. Others need to get a word in, too. You do your part well today! Venus guide to take advantage of opportunities, and this connection now concerns a life. Work hard to build or reinforce something significant. Lucky numbers: 6, 11, 20, 24, 31, 38. Birthdate of: Katherine Hepburn, actress; Dustin Hoffman, actor; Julia Ioliu, athlete.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Watch your words. You might have had a hard time finding the right ones today. Something surprising or irregular connected with your finances. Be careful with your money. Don't overdo it. Infinity is the limit today. Avoid what you can.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel nervous, excited and exposed to some degree today. Don't let your imagination run wild. Some kind of surprise is definitely in the offing.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Don't worry about the confusion today that you have to deal with. Know that there will be interruptions to your day. You have time for all of your shortcuts.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): A friend might be a little more helpful than you're probably used to. Don't avoid someone involved with you. Be sure to communicate with other people to prevent a quite exciting.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Feelings of rebellion, or even frustration, may be present. Watch what you say. You might not like what you hear. You might not like what you hear.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Pluto has an excellent power base in your solar system. You can't be afraid to take risks. You could be interrupted today by someone who is very important to you. Know that you have the power to make changes.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): It's a good time to specialize for the person. Don't return to old ways. You might have to make a change of something. Stay in touch with your bank account and credit cards. Travel could be a few surprises here.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Pluto is in your sign. You might know you're a force to be reckoned with. Perhaps somebody is demanding or feels he or she deserves more than it is. Be willing to negotiate.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Expenses and options related to technology, computers and communications are up. Action equipment or purchases (and related appointments) of automobiles. Anything can happen.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Expenses and options related to technology, computers and communications are up. Action equipment or purchases (and related appointments) of automobiles. Anything can happen.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't spend more than you have. Be careful with your money. Be sure to communicate with other people to prevent a quite exciting.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

		6						
	5					1		
9			8		7		2	
		4		6		3		
			5	7	3			
		1		2		7		
	1		9		5			4
		8					3	
						6		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	3	5	2	9	6	8	7	1
6	8	2	1	7	3	5	9	4
9	7	1	4	5	8	2	3	6
8	9	3	5	6	7	1	4	2
5	1	7	8	4	2	9	6	3
2	4	6	9	3	1	7	8	5
1	6	9	3	8	5	4	2	7
3	5	4	7	2	9	6	1	8
7	2	8	6	1	4	3	5	9

'Alone' deftly delivers the chills

By Noelani Torre

THOSE WHO THOSE THESE SIBLINGS are pairs in the neck should watch the Thai horror film, "Alone." The romance scenarios from Pathpoom Wongpoom and Banjong Pisanthanakun—the same pair who gave us the original "Shutter"—tells the tale of a woman whose dead twin just doesn't want to leave her, well, alone.

Identical twins

The premise is made even creepier by the fact that the siblings weren't just identical, they were also conjoined! One twin had insisted that they be separated, but apparently, something went wrong during the surgery—the other one died! Our lead character is literally attached to a ghost, a scenario that sounds pretty scary and unsettling even on paper.

When the story starts, the protagonist, Fin (Marsha Wattanapanitch), is living in Korea with boyfriend Pete (Nirapan Bunluesinjaikul). There, she gets a phone call telling her that her mother has suffered a stroke. Fin and Pete fly back home in Thailand, where they literally confront the ghosts—or ghost, rather—of the past.

It's a standard horror movie set-up—in fact, there's hardly anything new in the scene like. There's an ancestral house where, of course, the characters will stay even if it creeps them out, scary music plays when something creepy is about to happen, a vengeful female ghost with blue-tinted flesh pops out from time to time; everyone thinks Fin is merely hallucinating, and so on. Despite its predictable elements, however, the production packs quite a few decent scares, and the filmmakers are deft at creating an atmosphere of foreboding.

More stylish

The film's gallery is made up of dark, muted yet colorful textures, but the cinematography is more stylish than usual and technical details are well taken care of. If nothing else, it's clear that Wongpoom and Pisanthanakun are professionals—and their professionalism manifests itself in the movie's polished feel.

"Alone" manages to elicit shrieks. In fact, some scare tactics are memorable and will doubtless be copied by other horror flicks in the future.

Things take a turn for the unexpected in the last third of the movie...whether or not it's a good development depends on the viewer's capacity for suspending disbelief.

Then again, if you're searching a movie where people still dogpaddle inside on being alone, even when plenty spontaneous physically romance there, then you probably don't have a problem with that.

Silunderajumnan is competent enough and Wattanapanich gives a solid performance, though she gets upstaged by the ghost, of course. And Rinthiamas Buichoomrung, who plays the twins' mother, exudes a suitably disturbing air.

THAI horror-thriller "Alone" is an effective exemplar of foreboding.

CARMELITE Sister Monique (left) and the author at entrance to St. Therese's house.

French . . .

from page F6

Therese's sister photographed the reluctantly shortly before Therese died of tuberculosis.

The Museum of Joan of Arc in Rouen, which exhibits elements of her life, interestingly includes the only link between the two sisters—some letters of Therese and information on the play produced four centuries later, alongside reproductions of posters of movies made on the life of Joan of Arc. This is surely fast-gaining status, to our knowledge, no two women could be so dissimilar.

Joan is the ultimate example of the martyr-saint whose life is full of monumental actions, philosophy. What could be more compelling than the story of a village lass in the Middle Ages rewarding that she heard voices telling her that she must help deliver the French people from the English during the Hundred Years War, win back Orleans, and see the dauphin Charles VII crowned king at Rheims? And yet, she did it, coming her lean, discerning armor, and leading her troops to victory.

Cinematic ending

And what could be a more cinematic ending than being unfortunately delivered to the English, who tried her and burned her at the stake in Rouen for heresy and witchcraft, which Hollywood quickly recognized when it came out with the first three movies on her life?

A silent feature was directed by Theodor Dreyer in 1928, starring Maria Falconetti. In 1948 Ingrid Bergman played Joan (taking over from Leslie Caron, who had assisted to do it for years) in 1948 under Victor Fleming of "Gone with the Wind" fame, and Jean Seberg portrayed her in 1957 in a film directed by Otto Preminger.

In summary, the story of St. Therese is humor of dramatics. She was a prolific writer and preached the "little way" of trusting in Jesus in everything, and focusing on small daily sacrifices, instead of great deeds.

This doctrine was found tremendously appealing by thousands of Catholics and others trying to find holiness in ordinary life. A movie about her, "Story of a Soul," is more spectacular than anything else.

She entered the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux where she was 15 and died at only 24.

Stories

However, there are those who refuse to accept the fact that Therese was ordinary and simple. One such rebel writes: "When I think about the fact that in the standard stories about St. Therese we are never told about her sense of rolling in a life of warrior, priest, apostle, doctor, martyr—she wrote a play about a Jews of Arc, she presented to be a priest—it strikes me that, like the Virgin Mary, the institutional spin that's been given to her constitutes an attempt to 'tame' her and turn her into a docile woman who basically fits the bill of what ecclesiastical men thought represented a version of the 'southern gentlest' passive, submissive and quiet woman. There's also room to her and how she was called by God than the standard stories tell us."

Yet, in death, both are honored, each in their own right—the simple and the flamboyant.

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The thespic gospel according to Smith and Streep

STREEP Her performance in "Mamma Mia" is already stirring raves due to verve and sparkle.

By Nestor U. Torre

PROMOTING HIS LATEST STARRER, "Hancock," on TV recently, Will Smith was asked what he felt on him upon from other stars in his "class." He replied the key questions were and shared.

"It isn't talent—many actors have that. Maybe it's the hurt that I've always packed myself to do better. I find no different. It's my identity, to give those something new and special all the time."

"But, more than anything, else, I think the edge I may possibly have over others is the skill I've acquired from studying and actual experience. I've worked really hard to develop it through the years, and I think that's what fans recognize in and appreciate about my performances."

All-important playdate

Smith must know whereof he speaks, because his movies have made billions of dollars at the tills. And, most importantly of all, he's the "King" of the all-important playdate that is the July 4 weekend—which is when "Hancock" plays in the US.

So, prospective stars should follow his lead and test their talent only at their starting point. It's what they do to further develop it that truly counts.

And then established star talents cannot rest on their laurels and be complacent. Streep—at 59—is Meryl Streep. Even after decades of sterling performances on the big screen, she continues to dazzle and surprise movie fans, who keep looking forward to her next portrayal.

This month, we will all see moments in Streep's latest vibrant characterization in the film version of the hit stage musical, "Mamma Mia." Using the tough-made popular by Abba, the musical tells the story of a woman (Streep) whose daughter is about to get married, and naturally wants to be given away by her father.

That seemingly ordinary conceit turns out to be difficult and complicated to fulfill...because Streep's character had multiple boyfriends, each of whom could be her daughter's dad!

'Mother' role

This is Streep's 16th time to wear Abba attire, but her portrayal in "Mamma Mia" is already different. She's just as funny and sparkle. Yes, it a "mother" role, but she doesn't play it in a predictably maternal manner. Instead, she makes her character come to life in a delightfully refreshing way.

The icing on the already delicious cake that is her years-spoil is her breezy rendition of some beautiful songs, surprising viewers who have typecast her only as a dramatic actress.

Creative ideas

What can young talents learn from all this? That stars like Streep don't run out of creative ideas, and to her do even better with the passing years.

So, they too should learn to treat each acting assignment as a fresh challenge and opportunity to further hone their talent ...And to treat each role assigned to them as though it were their last!

SMITH: Sees talent only as a starting point.

Celebs beat the odds to triumph over rejection

By Bobi Corvera

WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT an experienced Hollywood producer would reject a very beautiful child actress because "her eyes are too old"? The snapper's violet eyes would later be beguile the world...by making stars of Lassie and turning both Esther Geiser and Mark Antony in the biggest film spectacle of the '50s! She has won two Academy Awards and won the first name to get paid a cool million dollars per film. Her name: Elizabeth Taylor.

Sister Isabel ("Shoot," "Write Like") was drowned too short when in first came to Hollywood. So, an agent he later married joined him with plastic Sensitive like Wrinkle Medium. Soon, his dawning power overcame his vertical limitations. The '50' actor even shaved opposite the statuesque Sofia Loren—who's '59'—in "Boy on a Dolphin."

Insecure starlets

On the other hand, Esther Williams was drowned too tall Audrey Hepburn and Sarah Shearer in "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." In her autobiography, she recounts how her two insecure costars made fun of her superb skills—assets that actually brought her stardom and a first Office Queen title in the early '50s.

Other actresses who were deemed too tall included Merle Oberon, Gloria de Haulf, Janet Leigh, Joan Fontaine, appeared with Lana Turner Hilton and Ava Gardner and with tough, short actors like James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson.

Fortunately, for Smith, Neal Dodge and Bergman, there were tall actors like Gary Cooper, Gregory Peck and John Wayne.

Bergman entered in a number of movies with Cooper, and her first Hollywood film, "Intermezzo," was with the 6'4" Gregory Peck. Even Katherine Hepburn, who was 5'7", was considered too tall by her favorite leading man, Spencer Tracy. The 5'4" Jimmy Stewart JC's tallest men than made up for his lack of commensurate good looks.

Marlon Brando's "problem" were her sons, which was 6'2" and Sal Mineo, 5'4" etc." In fact, for a while, she was referred to as "The Jamesons" Heiress, the Identical Awards girl from the Bronx decided to academize the issue by posing for the cover of a nationally circulated magazine. Soon, journalist-starved referring to her as Jacksonville.

Acting lessons

Sometimes, severe inferiority complexes to achieve success. Anne Bancroft appeared dominated to become just another starlet in a string of B-movies. So, she left Hollywood, took acting lessons in New York—and took home a Tony Award for "Two for the Seesaw," opposite Henry Fonda.

Bancroft followed that triumph success with "The Miracle Worker," for which she won her second Tony—and, when the play was adapted for the movies, she won an Oscar! She capped her triumphant return to Hollywood when she portrayed the unforgettable Mrs. Robinson in "The Graduate."

Sylvester Stallone would never have become the major star that he is today if he allowed Hollywood's initial assessment of his limp, inert and voice to deter him from continuing to become a star. Like "Rambo" and "Rocky," he beat all the odds to become the champion he always believed he was!

TAYLOR: The stunningly beautiful actress was shown to be above her eyes were "too old."

BERGMAN: The 5'9" actress had to be paired with tall leading men like the 6'4" Gregory Peck.

Quest for a national film archive continues

By Clodualdo del Mundo Jr.

ARMANDO "MANDY" EAU Jr. described himself as a fan of Nora Aunor, the Superstar of Philippine Cinema in the '60s and the '70s. He was an ordinary fan—in his words, he loved Nora Aunor "superto-the-max."

I didn't know this personally. I just learned about him through the internet when he passed away not too long ago. The announcement from his fellow Noranians attached no story that Mandy wrote about himself as a superfan, entitled "Mandy," which describes his devotion to the superstar. In his letter, a photo of the actress and even plus a special plus on the family altar. He knows, because of what he refers to as Nora Aunor reverence, is marked by Aunor's huge photos on the door and windows.

This devotion, which started when Mandy was in the first grade and continued till his death at age 46, resulted in 27 volumes of book-length clippings from 1967 to 2008. There are 10 photo albums...including stills from the movies' posters.

Big player

Mandy's there are 17 cuts and layout of Nora's films, from "Si Cora the World" (1967), when Nora was just a bit player, to her 2004 film, "Magdalena." He also scrapbooks his collection of awards by La mance that he would listen to every morning to set each day right. Indeed, there may not be that kind of collection anywhere else.

What does Mandy's story say about archiving in the Philippines? Collecting, which is a major part of archiving, is done by people like Mandy. Collectors are motivated by personal tastes and desires.

In this country, if you need stills from audition pictures, you go to individual producers and you hope that they have saved these stills and would be willing to share them. Or, you go to people like Gene Hernandez, who keeps his collection in detail, photographs books.

If you need movie posters, you visit production companies and pray that they have a substance of their posters—or, you can go to Ike Seluterio, a movie poster designer who keeps a good collection of his own works. If you need movie ads or

JOAN of Arc processional: Ramon Revilla's sports. Top right: Joan of Arc burning at the stake in silhouette in Rivera. Bottom right: Hollywood movie poster on display.

French saints' contrasting personae vivify all-encompassing power of faith

Text and photos by Mikey M. Custodio

IF ONE WERE TO SPEAK IN CINEMATIC terms, the life of Joan of Arc would be considered an existential, while St. Therese of Lisieux would be indie-nominal. There real other examples we can extend during a recent visit to the villages of Rouen and Lisieux, towns widely associated with Joan of Arc and St. Therese, respectively.

We had not known previously that both have been designated patron saints of France, that they spent their lives...400 years apart—in France. Or that Joan was sidelined by St. Therese, who wrote and produced a play on her life!

Facts

Recently, also, facts regarding a relatively recent independent author, "Therese," appeared to bring accounts of indie enthusiasts. The film is about Therese Martin, a French girl in the late 1800s who became a saint. It also made mentions of the play where

FRENCH 11

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Heath Ledger's Joker is the height of screen villainy

LEDGER: Wins raves for his performance in "The Dark Knight."

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By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN JACK NICHOLSON PLAYED The Joker in a Batman movie years ago, he chose to go the "serious character" route, focusing more on the arch villain's cowardice, fake-joke-telling and only occasionally blowing up his candy-coated cover.

Not you, it's the late Heath Ledger's turn to give the colorful character a spin around the movie reel in "The Dark Knight," and he opts to play it as crazed and cruel as heck. The clown makeup is still there, but it's no longer perky and fun, it's mangled into his maniacal face like a hatchet-to-pie death mask.

Tragic take

This early, some industry observers and armchair psychologists of the obsessive sort are concluding that Ledger's heartwrenching and even tragic take on The Joker parallels his own physical and mental story, thus leading to his most endearing double—err, way it the other way around? Did The Joker's grim view of life affect the actor so much that he lost hope in his own existence?

Idle speculation about morbidity spirit, however, now comes the key question: When it came to portraying The Joker, did Nicholson get it right, or nearly so, on the money?

After stealing that $64,000-question-box to our Batcave, we've concluded that their radically different takes weren't as author-driven as initially believed. They were simply going with the flow of their respective Eras. Nicholson played it more cartoony because his movie was more tongue-in-cheek to overall tone, while "The Dark Knight" is, that's it, dark—so, that's how Ledger went.

Some things go beyond logic, however. When "The Dark Knight" opens in town, viewers will still be looking for "telltale" signs in Ledger's malevolent portrayal of The Joker that would appear to indicate his hopeless and tormented state of mind, as he unmistakably received his final screen performance.

Even if we don't go that way, however, there's little doubt that, in his last film, Heath Ledger has taken his singular game to the height of screen villainy.

Teaser

Starting next month, let's wrap our pop-culture brains around the most-committed teaser How would Ledger's Joker stack up against similarly celebrated villains already enshrined in the movie world's pantheon of cinematic evil? —Like Anthony Hopkins in "The Silence of the Lambs," Anthony Perkins in "Psycho," Robert De Niro in "Cape Fear," Gwen Welles in "Streets of Evil"—err, ?

Hmmmm . . . we daresay—quite easily, indeed!

To shed more light on Ledger's thespic prowess in coming up with his signature, extended Joker characterization, here are excerpts from an interview he granted last year, before his shocking demise:

"I was a huge fan of Jack Nicholson's version of The Joker in Tim Burton's film. But, I knew that there was a big difference between a Batman movie and one by Chris Nolan, who directed our film, 'The Dark Knight.' So, there's enough room for a fresh portrayal. And so, I kind of steered away from what Jack did.

License

"My preparation for the role hinged on the fact Joker needs I pretty. A mask always gives you the license to do what you want. How did I get into his evil character? I think we all have it in us. Sometimes, I conserve with some nasty thoughts. It's kind of like using your mind. I don't know what that does to your mouth and eyes —it feels evil when it's not necessarily an evil thought . . .

"Yes, Batman beats the Joker up a couple of times. And, you know what? But I get battered and bruised, I like feeling pain, too. It's kind of fun, I like it.

"Batman and The Joker—that's the key relationship, what the film is psychologically about. They can't really live without the other. It's that kind of relationship, like they have no real purpose in life without each other. So, they don't really want each other dead.

Character

"Did I have fun playing The Joker? Yes but. What I especially liked about the character was, there's nothing consistent about him at all. So, he's not consistently dark or consistently funny—he's just going up and down all the time.

"—That's why this has been the most fun I've had playing a role! I'm really surprised Chris Nolan knew I had something in me like this. But yeah, it's the truth. It's definitely the most fun I've had—and the most freedom!"

NICHOLSON: Focused more on the artist than a character's maniacal persona.

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G1 SATURDAY Special

SATURDAY, JULY 5, 2008

HBO feature examines assimilation, invasion through the Native American experience

By Nico P. Asis

IS THE EMMY AWARD-WINNING NON-fiction epic, "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," which premieres in Asia on July 11 at 10 p.m. on the HBO Signature channel, director Yves Simoneau adapts Dee Brown's 1970 book, which traces the systematic displacement and slaughter of Native Americans in the Wild West by the United States federal government in the late 19th century after jostling over the constitutional ownership of the gold-rich Black Hills of South Dakota.

The film complements Brown's detailed historical retelling and focuses, instead, on the events that took place between the bloody Battle at Little Big Horn in Montana in 1876—which is largely remembered as the worst defeat that the US Cavalry suffered in the Indian Wars—and the massacre of Sioux prisoners at Wounded Knee in South Dakota on Dec. 29, 1890, which ended the Indian Wars.

Perspective

If you want to get a different perspective on "How the West was won," HBO's made-for-TV movie is a should-see—and an expected. In Brown and Simoneau's version, the White Man is not necessarily the courageous conqueror fighting sexy to protect himself against the savagery of the Red Man. Nor, as our characters, is an attempt to eliminate the bloodbath,

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Visually engaging TV commercial

MISSOURI BIG LEAGUERS IN THE news talked years with a visually engaging TV commercial that all freshmen stars identify with. It's all about forging some bonds. Its upbeat message also resonates with other people who are entering a new environment.

MONTAGE

The eye-catching TVC features a student who feels "alienated" on his first day in school. He sees his schoolmates as "aliens"—so, the commercial assumes, might newcomers as such!

He fights on, however, when he sees that he shares something in common with them—a love for Smooth Joe.

Post-production for Smooth's latest commercial was done in Bristol, United Kingdom, aided 422 Frames—a company known for its expertise in CGI production. It was directed by Matthew Hayes. Business executive for Smooth is Bruno Oberbeck.

The TVC is produced by Pebbles Manila, with JJ Henson as creative director, and Dee Sanchez and Mike Talampas as art directors. It can be downloaded via mysmile1.com.ph.

COLLEGE freshman with his "alien" schoolmates.

New Nickmom lineup

A new Nickmom lineup begins Monday through Friday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Nickelodeon Movies, "Rugrats" and "Hey, Arnold!" Tuesday "The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron," Wednesday, "The Fairly Odd Parents." Thursday "SpongeBob SquarePants." Friday, "Avatar, The Legend of Aang."

Brad Mark's new weekend block WOW! Movies to a double bloc of sci-fi series with the Movies 5 weekend countdown.

Also watch out for the brand new seasons of "Team Galaxy" and "Wayland" every Saturday at 4:30 p.m. Plus: "Ida and the Power of Judy," a new comic adventure about the exploits and misadventures of jungle boy, Tak, beginning July 23.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 10:45 a.m., "Spider-Man 3." Tomorrow at 9 p.m., "Ocean's 13." July 7 at 9 a.m., "Wonderland." July 8 at 8 a.m., "Man of the Year." July 9 at 9 p.m., "Touch the Top of the World." July 10 at 3 p.m., "A Little Princess." July 11 at 3 p.m., "The Producers."

On Cinemax at 7 p.m., "Mr. Bean's Bang, Bang." Tomorrow at 3 p.m., "Bee My Life." July 7 at 9 a.m., "Up Periscope." July 8 at 9 a.m., "Ocean's 13." July 9 at 7 a.m., "20 Million Miles to Earth." July 10 at 9 a.m., "To Catch A Thief." July 11 at 7 a.m., "The Prince and the Showgirl."

Nestlé Koko Krunch's breakfast advocacy

Having breakfast isn't enough, you have to make sure your first meal of the day includes healthy food, like whole grain. For this reason, Nestlé Philippines has launched a major nutrition movement by connecting to image of breakfast cereals, like Nestlé Koko Krunch, to whole grain, which studies have shown is healthy and nutritious.

Whole grain contains complex carbohydrates and fiber that release steady fuel into the body, providing children the energy to stay focused and involved, and research shows their student and other school activities, as well as helping prevent diseases like diabetes and child obesity.

Nestlé Koko Krunch's "Nestlé Eight Servings in Unego" breakfast advocacy was recently launched in Marikina City by "Bonggo Ka, Sey!" crews had brand ambassador, Marian Lizo-Pangilinan, encouraging mothers to be "super sweepy" by providing them kids with enjoyable and nutritious breakfast products such as whole grain cereals like Nestlé Koko Krunch.

"Bonggo Ka, Sey" ended with Nestlé hosting community leaders, particularly local health officials and nutritionists, for their key role in promoting the healthy breakfast campaign.

'Wonder Mom'

At 8 (30 a.m. today and tomorrow on Channel 2, Karen Davila takes on a new assignment and helps women become super mommy in "Wonder Mom," the country's first and only parenting show.

On Saturdays, the show will focus on parenting issues involving our mother and her kids. On Sundays, Karen expands the discussion to include other parents and experts.

On Studio 23

At 9:45 p.m. tomorrow, "Dirty Sexy Money" premieres after "Us Girls." The hit show is about the Darlings of New York City—they have money, power and privilege, but have secrets and problems galore, which their lawyer-friend family lawyer Peter Krause has to fix. Donald Sutherland, William Baldwin, Tamara Feldman and Glenda Gayer round.

Also watch out for the third season of "Ghost Whisperer" on July 13 at 9:45 p.m., "Miss Universe

DAPHNE Hosts ABS-CBN's new parenting show.

Yam excited to premiere 'The Echo' in Montreal film fest

LOS ANGELES—YAM LAWSON "The Echo" will have its world premiere on July 27 at Ibidem, the Montreal Fantasy and genre film festival, which runs from July 3 to 23 and has become one of North America's important cinematic events.

Over 80,000 tickets were sold in last year's staging of the Canadian event. Several team-lawyer movies, including "Bingo," got their initial boost in the fest. Word had told us earlier that it was his work for "The Echo," the American remake of the Tagalog film, "Sigaw," to premiere in the Montreal festival.

The Filipino filmmaker got his wish with a screening of the movie at the Hall Theatre on July 17 at 7:30 p.m. He will be on hand to promote his 30-minute thriller, which stars Jessica Sutherland as Bobby, his Gabardo (who inspires her role), Amelia Warner, Kevin Durand, Lauren Lawson, Carlos Leon and Frank Taylor Moore.

Synopsis

Todd Brown provided the following synopsis and description of "The Echo" on Ibidem's website (www.ibidemfilmfestival.com): "Freddy, out of prison, Bobby returns home—but home is not as it was before. His mother died a while ago, death which he was made the prince, isolated by her growing madness and paranoia. His friends either have moved away or won't return his calls, and the girl he loves seems equally afraid to have him near her.

"So, while New York City rumors that Bobby is always out regarded with life, he is nevertheless on his own. Maybe it's the solitude getting to him or the memories of his mother, but soon, he is plagued by the eerie sounds that his mother once phoned about—a situation made worse by the sounds of violence from the apartment next door.

"Resistance was passed to prevent the Canadian premiere of Yam Laranas' Filipino horror movie, 'Sigaw,' to couple of years back. Now, we are even more pleased to present the world premiere of Laranas' first English-language remake of his original film. A moody, atmospheric piece of work, Laranas' movie puts a unique spin on the Asian ghost story by trading the latter out on technology or its ghosts, but in this reworking we know that you can't help but encounter if you're living in the big city. Laranas puts a familiar face on evil—and that makes it all the more effective!"

Television commercials

His achievement Yam, who's in the Philippines, via e-mail. He told us what he has been accomplishing himself while he's back home. "I'm spending as much time as possible with my wife and two 2-year-old boys. I take him to school. If my wife is in the office, we go for a drive-in-ice cream walk without a care. I go to the gym five times a week. I've been doing television commercials and keeping my blog updated. I keep myself busy. Otherwise, I'd go nuts keeping track of The Echo's distribution plan and screenings...Excerpts:

Significant

How significant is it for you that Sigaw, which screened "Sigaw" in 2006, is also premiering "The Echo"?

Pretty significant. It is very important to me. It's like my very own reboot. It's a little surreal, since I'm going back there with kind of the same—but, at the same time, different—screen. Plus, the line up of movies and filmmakers joining this year is incredible!

What are your hopes and fears in the world premiere of your "baby," so to speak?

Premiere fears are commonplace...dance of 70,000—40 cents! I am nervous. Embarrassing that we could fill up the Dolby Cinema hope that the new version will be received with the same (or more) enthusiasm and positive reception as the original. A lot of festival-goers are excited about the movie. I hope I won't disappoint them.

Now that you've done making the film, how different is "The Echo" from "Sigaw"?

If you watch the movie side-by-side and pay attention to the negative, you'll definitely enjoy it. It's a classic ghost story—it's very haunting, and the tension is rich and atmospheric. We chose who Yam wrote "Sigaw," expect a new treatment to Sandra Thomas Fest, who he proposed to use a lot of scarier moments.

Are you flying to Montreal? Is your family attending the premiere with you?

Yes, I will arrive the day before the screening and will fly back home the day after (due to other commitments). Sadly, my family won't be able to join me, but I hope to bring them to the US premiere.

Will your main stars, including Iya Gabardo, be attending Fantasia?

Unfortunately, no. Although we might have to attend a friend's wedding in Vancouver. Jessa Bradford is shooting "W" as Bruce Jones and another movie right after, before she flies to set for part of our Phil. publicity tour in mid-August. Production crews and distributors want her spending for this event. Fantasia is spending for my trip.

Steve Jones, his cast members, Yam's fellow filmmakers, Sigaw's people of your back. Now, we are even more pleased to promote the world premiere of Laranas' first English-language remake of his original film. A moody, atmospheric piece of work, Laranas' movie puts a unique spin on the Asian ghost story by trading the latter out on technology or its ghosts, but in this reworking we know that you can't help but encounter if you're living in the big city. Laranas puts a familiar face on evil—and that makes it all the more effective!

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